

**A
MARVEL
MONTHLY**

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STARBURST

SCIENCE FANTASY IN TELEVISION, CINEMA AND COMICS



**creator
interviewed**

**DOUG
TRUMBULL
on CLOSE
ENCOUNTERS**

**MESSAGE
FROM SPACE**
review

**SILENT
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SUPERMAN



MOVIE REVIEW





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STARBURST

SCIENCE FANTASY IN TELEVISION, CINEMA AND COMICS

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It's now over twelve months since *Star Wars* opened in Britain, creating a veritable deluge of sf product onto the market.

Sceptics said it was a passing phase, but this issue we've got 48 pages worth of proof to the contrary.

Science fiction movies and tv shows are still flourishing the world over. Truth to say, many projects had been under way before *Star Wars* opened, though they've all received a boost in faith and (more important) budget over the last year.

This issue goes a long way to show the world-wide acceptance of media sf through its international coverage...

We've got *Message From Space* (Japan) *Superman*—the movie (USA), our own popular *Dr Who* and *Blake's 7* (which should be starting its latest tv season around the time you read this), plus coverage of Britain's first-ever Fantasy Film Convention.

Things to Come is once more brimming over with news on future projects, while, to balance things out, we also look back to an sf classic, *Silent Running*, complementing the second part of our Doug Trumbull interview.

Next month's issue will be a dream for special effects fans as we cover Trumbull's new effects concept, and interview the men behind *Superman—The Movie*. Until then,

Dez Skinn
Editor.

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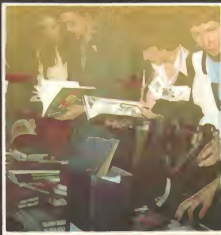
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The Starburst Interview

TERRY NATION

—creator-writer of **BLAKE'S 7**, **The DALEKS** and **The SURVIVORS**

Terry Nation is best-known for his fantasy writing: as creator of the Daleks and now *Blake's 7*. But it wasn't always that way. He originally wanted to get up on a stage and he laughed at.

Born in Cardiff, Wales, he grew up during World War II. His father was away in the army and his mother was an air-raid warden, so there were times when he would sit alone in the air-raid shelter as German planes bombed Cardiff. He says he believes in the only child syndrome: "Being an only child (as he was), you have to invent your own persona and your own stories." As for other influences, he says: "I grew up with a marvellous radio service that had a thing called *Children's Hour*. I read early. And I also grew up in the front row of the local Odeon."

He started his working life at eighteen, as a commercial traveller for the family furniture factory. But, aged 25, he gave up this career and moved to London with hopes of becoming a stage comedian. These hopes were dashed. As he says, "to play your best joke and receive back absolute silence is pretty devastating". Eventually, a talent broker told him: "Son, the jokes are funny—it's you that's not." If there is a turning-point in Terry Nation's life, then that was it.

Fortunately, he met comedian Spike Milligan who saw Nation was starving, gave him £10 and commissioned him to write a *Goon Show* script. At the time Milligan ran a talent agency which included Ray Galton, Alan Simpson, Eric Sykes and Johnny Speight. It was a small world and Nation's successful comedy script led to writing work for such comedians as Peter Sellers, Ted Ray, Harry Worth, Frankie Howerd and Tony Hancock. His radio work included *All My Eye*, *Idiot Weekly*, *The Jimmy Logan Show*, *Val*

Parnell's Startime and the Elsie and Doris Waters' *Floggits* series. In all, he wrote more than 200 radio comedy shows. But, by that time, he had decided his comedy writing "wasn't really very good".

So he turned down the chance to write four tv episodes of *The Army Game* (ironically starring the first *Dr. Who*, William Hartnell). Instead, he



took time out to write an entire comedy play for tv's *Uncle Selwyn*. This led to three scripts for the ITV sf series *Out of This World* (1962). He adapted Philip K. Dick's *Impostor*, Clifford Simak's *Immigrant* and wrote an original screenplay *Botany Bay*.

He then returned to comedy, writing for a Tony Hancock stage show in Nottingham: "I leapt at it because he was the greatest comic in

the world". At which point, "the BBC came up with this idea for this crazy doctor who travelled through time and space. They called my agent, my agent called me, Hancock said *Don't write for flippin' kids* and I told my agent to turn it down." Luckily, Hancock and Nation had a "dispute", parted company and Nation agreed to work on *Dr. Who*. But then Eric Sykes offered him a comedy writing assignment in Sweden, so he wrote the seven episodes of the first Dalek story (*The Dead Planet*) in seven days and left to join Sykes.

Dr. Who first appeared on screen in 1963. Within three weeks, it was drawing the largest audience for its time-slot in BBC history. After a four-part introductory story, *The Dead Planet* introduced the Daleks. In 1965, Dalek merchandising (toys etc) reportedly earned Nation £50,000. *The Dr. Who and the Daleks* feature film (1965) reportedly brought him in £300,000. And *Daleks—Invasion Earth 2150 AD* followed in 1966. By 1977, the Daleks were still one of the top four tv toys and their creator was reportedly earning £40,000 a year from scripts. The Daleks were only a small part of his output.

He wrote a dozen scripts (more than anyone else) for the original *Saint* tv series. That success led to a job as Script Editor and writer on *The Baron* series. He also wrote for *The Champions*, was Script Editor on *The Avengers* (the series co-starring Linda Thorson), was Script Editor and Associate Producer on *The Persuaders*, created *Survivors* and created *Blake's 7*.

Starburst met Terry Nation at London's Reform Club in Pall Mall (the base for Jules Verne's *Around the World in 80 Days*) and they talked about the world which Nation has created.

Interview conducted by John Fleming

What did you think when you heard about Dr. Who for the first time?

I didn't have any confidence in the series. I read the brochure at the briefing and said, "There's no way this show can ever succeed." And I don't think it could have done if it had followed the route that they had planned for it.

What was that?

That it actually went into historical situations and was reasonably educational. That was the direction the BBC wanted to take and Sidney Newman (BBC tv's Head of Drama) was bitterly opposed to any bug-eyed monsters. We could go into the future, but it had to have a relatively scientific base and it was going to be 'good solid stuff'. He violently objected to the Daleks when he

saw them on the script. It was only the determination of the producer Verity Lambert that got them on. Or maybe it was the fact that the BBC had to go on. They'd had them built and they'd spent so much

"The Daleks represent government, officialdom, that unhearing, unthinking, blanked out face of authority that will destroy you."

money they had to go on. Nobody had faith in them, including myself.

How did you originally visualise the Daleks?
I knew that I didn't want them to be men dressed up. That was my first personal

brief. I had seen the Georgian State Dancers—the girls who move with long skirts and appear not to move—they just glide. That was the kind of image I wanted to get. I knew what the voice would sound like, because it had to be mechanical and broken down into syllables all the time. I made a few mistakes.

Such as?

The hands. They became enormously cumbersome. I made a few mistakes about being able to go up stairs and things of that sort. I made the cardinal mistake of killing them off at the end of the first series, which had to be rectified. But what actually happened with the BBC was that episode one of *The Dead Planet* came up. It was quite a good eerie beginning and, at the end

of it—the last frame of the picture—we saw a bit of a Dalek. We didn't see a whole Dalek. And the phones started to ring. People saying, "Christ, what is that thing?"

A week later the Dalek appeared. And a week after that the mail started to arrive. And then it mushroomed. As a writer, you are a very anonymous figure. Nobody notices your name on the screen. And, for the first time in my life, I started to get mail. It wasn't just a couple of letters: it was thousands of letters. They were coming by

"I went to the United States in 1965 and said I wanted to make a series called The Daleks."

the sackload. So I twigged I had something going for me here: something was happening. And of course the BBC twigged it as well and they knew they had to change the direction that *Dr Who* was intended to go in. So a lot of the stuff they had prepared was put aside and they went much more into the sf area. And I think that actually established the ultimate pattern of where it was going.

The series has never really caught on in America. Why do you think that is?

It's played now in syndication.

But the networks were never really interested, were they?

No, well how could they be with the quality of the production? There was always a certain sort of Englishness about it. It was very much a domestic product, I think. I went to the United States (in 1965) and said I wanted to make a series called *The Daleks*. I went there to hustle and got very close to doing it.

What sort of series would it have been?

There would have been no *Dr Who* because I had no copyright on the Doctor character. But I could take the Daleks away and do it. I might have to pay the BBC something for their interest in the design, but they're my characters. Indeed, the BBC was going to go with me on this series at one point. But they weren't—at the time—a very good business

"My favourite character in *Dr Who* was Davros: The man in the wheelchair who was actually perpetuating his image in his machines."

organisation. And the whole thing sort of crumbled to dust. And then I'd moved on to something else: I think I'd gone on to *The Saint*. And from there I went on to *The Baron* and on to *The Avengers* and straight on to *The Persuaders*. And each one of these is a big block of your life. There was never time. Hence, when the BBC wanted the Daleks again, I wasn't available to write them. So other people wrote those episodes but they never understood the nature of the



The first Dalek story of the entire Doctor Who series. The original Doctor (William Hartnell) comes face-to-face with his metal adversaries.

Daleks as well as I did.

So what is the nature of the Daleks? You must have based them on a real person or a number of real people, did you?

I can't isolate one character. But I suppose you could say the Nazis. The one recurring dream I have—once or twice a year it comes to me—is that I'm driving a car very quickly and the windscreen is a bit murky. The sun comes onto it and it becomes totally opaque. I'm still hurtling forward at incredible speed and there's nothing I can see or do and I can't stop the car. That's my recurring night-

mare and it's very simply solved by psychologists who say you're heading for your future. You don't know what your future is. However much you plead with somebody to save you from this situation, everybody you turn to turns out to be of 'Them'. And there's nobody left—You are the lone guy.

The Daleks are all of 'Them' and they represent for so many people so many different things, but they all see them as government, as officialdom, as that unhearing, unthinking, blanked-out face of



*The Doctor, Ian and Barbara, are cornered by the Daleks in the story, *The Survivors* (1963).*

authority that will destroy you because it wants to destroy you. I believe in that now: I've directed them more in that way over the years.

Presumably by writing about the future, by creating your own future, you're making what lies at the end of the road, at the other side of the windscreen, less frightening because it's less unknown and because you're controlling it.

Yes. I mean, Dr Who always comes out of it alive, however bad the problem. The good guys, if they don't win exclusively, at least

"In this country, if I write a novel, I am instantly dismissed as being a television writer."

come out winning that particular round of the war. Dr Who doesn't win the war, but he wins a battle.

You once said all your writing was about survival.

Yes, well it's a theme that's actually gone through my work enormously. I see minefields all around me: I'm not that confident. I've been going back and forth from London to Geneva (working on a new project) and it may be like Walter Mitty but I'm in that aeroplane and I'm waiting for the moment when they say, "Can anybody fly this aero-

plane?" And I can't but I know that finally I'm going to be the one who has to do it. There is menace all around you. It's a fairly dark world out there. It doesn't infringe very much on my personal life, but when I listen to any news broadcast I think, "God! I might be living in Beirut. I could be one of those people in Beirut being shelled every day of my life." As a wartime child, I grew up when bombs were dropping and men actually were trying to kill me—not personally, but they wouldn't mind if they killed me.

Your Genesis of the Daleks story for Dr Who has come astonishingly surrealistic scenes in it. Dr Who falling down a cliff, the girl with her foot trapped in the railway line, genetic experiments, gas battles.

My favourite character in a Dr Who series in year was Davros: the man in the wheelchair who was actually perpetuating his image in his machines. He was a creator. "You are made in your creator's image." That's what I wanted to do. I think it was a smashing set of episodes. I loved them. David Maloney directed it (he also directed some *Blake's 7* episodes) and he found production values they hadn't had there for ages. It seems to me if you have to say, "What's the best Dr Who series that ever happened?" from my point of view that would be it.

And it had that astonishing battlefield.

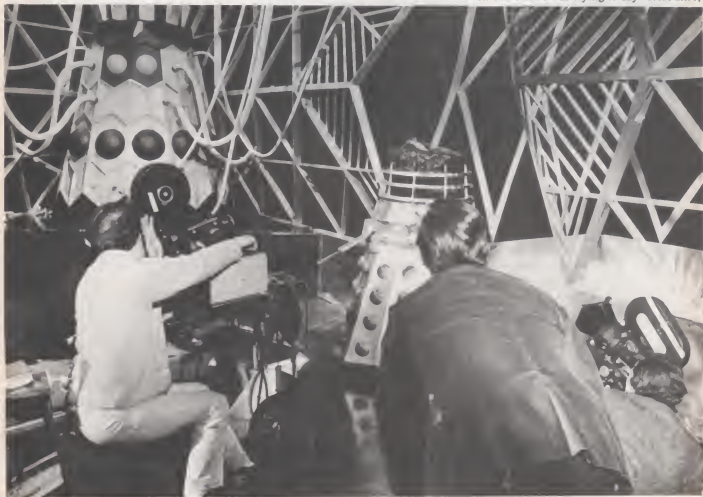
It was a bizarre World War I battlefield because, lying alongside the most incredible space-age gun is an iron hatchet. I think it was really something I saw as a kid: a movie called *Things to Come* (1935) where everybody had reverted almost to primitivism, but they were also building this great spaceship. The technology had run out; they were going back to more and more basic things. But somewhere in there was a *corps elite* of people working who still had their priorities. I truly believe it is set up that, if it happens

"The Daleks are Mark I. In *Blake's 7* The Federation is the Daleks Mark II, if you like."

someone presses the button or releases the virus or whatever, there are areas of elitism that will be protected until the very last moment because the future of mankind is in the hands of these elements. And (in *Genesis of the Daleks*) Davros' force was called The Elite.

*That brings us to your TV series *Survivors*. It was more serious than, say, Dr Who.*

Oh, very much more. I was very committed to that series and still am very concerned about our increasing reliance on technology. In *Survivors* I was trying to say "Here am I,



A rare, behind-the-scenes shot of the Doctor Who special effects team at work. A scene from The Evil of the Daleks (1967).



Terry Nation poses for a photograph with a metallic friend. The robot will be appearing in the second series of *Blake's 7*, to be screened in the new year.

a man of the generation that landed men on the moon, and I don't know how to make an iron axe-head". That's what concerned me. There's nothing in my house that is the exclusive product of one man. I mean, a matchstick is a huge piece of technology. A length of line, a piece of thread made of nylon is an enormous industry. That bothers me because I think that, at some point, I am going to be thrown on my own resources by either world cataclysm or personal cataclysm. And I don't know anything. That's the message that *Survivors* was supposed to offer.

You wrote the novelisation of Survivors yourself—something you didn't do for Blake's 7. Why was that?

Because I cared enough. I found it very tough too. But I wanted to do it my way. In this country, if I write a novel, I am instantly dismissed as being a television writer who has ventured into the rarefied world of the book writer. I sell a lot of copies, but I really shouldn't be there. It was noticed very badly in this country—I mean very, very few notices took me seriously or

the book seriously. Nobody liked it as a literary piece. Then it appeared in America, where I am next-to-unknown as a television writer, and it was reviewed. A lot of terrible reviews, but some very good ones. People took it seriously and were concerned. And so 'The Novel' is somewhere in my future. The film director Sam Peckinpah was quoted as saying if he gets 60% of what he wants on screen, he's a very lucky man.

I would have said he's been very lucky if he's got 60% of what he's always wanted to achieve. When BBC2 opened, they did a big drama series and I did an adaptation of *A Kiss Before Dying*, a novel by Ira Levin, who wrote *Rosemary's Baby*. I did a good adaptation of it and it was really quite well produced for an American subject in Britain, which we don't do terribly well. And I actually sat back and forgot I'd written it and watched it and enjoyed it. Very seldom am I able to dissociate myself until years later. When I watch first time, I think: "That's not what I meant... He doesn't look like that" and so on. It is always frustration. But then you'd go potty

if you really let that get to you. So you live with it.

Do you 'own' the Daleks?

Yes.

A percentage?

A large percentage of them, yes. The BBC and I have a deal. Nobody can use the Daleks without my consent in any situation. And if they use the Daleks, then I benefit financially from their use anywhere in the world. There's a lovely one—there's nothing I can do about it—a new ad (for Rediffusion TV rentals) that's running at the moment with a remote control colour set and the headline is *I Will Obey*. I think I've sort of put things into the English language now. I can't copyright that phrase, but it's associated with Daleks. And *Exterminate*—I didn't really invent that (laughs). The Germans did. I think my big moment of great happiness was when somebody told me *Dalek* was in the new—full—Oxford Dictionary—You know, the twelve volumes of obscure words. *Dalek* apparently is in there: that pleased me no end.

You're always reported as not knowing where you got the word from. Do you?

No, but I'll tell you a story that I found fascinating. Someone in the *Daily Mail* dragged it up years ago. Their line was

"In the *Survivors* series I was trying to say: Here I am, a man of the generation that landed a man on the moon, and I don't know how to make an iron axe-head."

WHAT DO PRESIDENT TITO AND TERRY NATION HAVE IN COMMON?

And the answer is nothing, of course. However, Terry Nation doesn't know the meaning of the word *Dalek* and President Tito does. Because in Serbo-Croat the word *Dalek* means "far and distant things". Isn't that incredible? I found that very, very strange and bizarre. I don't meet too many Serbo-Croats in my regular, daily life.

Blake's 7 was widely criticised for having cheap production values.

What can I say?

They looked pretty cheap.

They were. Yes, they were by any standards. I mean, you have to know the current state of the BBC. They were the best we could produce and we have never done less than our best. But, finally, if you want to buy a motor car and you can afford a second-hand 1948 Ford Anglia, that's what you go after. So yes, OK, to the buff we are not in *Star Trek*'s class, but we attempted more than *Star Trek* ever did.

But with no decent budget.

Well, it would have been nice but that wasn't possible—it wasn't achievable—so you go with what you've got.

Avon seemed to me to be a far more attractive and dominant character than Blake himself.

Aaah. He (Paul Darrow) took hold of the part and made it his own. It could have been a very dull role, but this particular actor took hold of it and gave it much better dimensions than I'd ever put on paper. He is an enormously popular character. He is incredibly popular—and rightly so. He's a good actor. I think he's terrific. I enjoy watching him all the time. This is how stars emerge, I suppose: it's the actor's doing.

Was *Blake's 7* easier to write than *Dr Who*?
Presumably because it's longer it's easier to pace.

Yes. Tempo is vital. Years ago a radio producer told me that all of drama is shaped like a 'W'. You start at a peak, but

"Hammer movies are very interesting: when they do their heavy horror sequences, somewhere in there is always the light relief."

you can't ride on that peak all the time because it's just very boring. Hammer movies are interesting: when they do their very heavy horror sequences, somewhere in there is always the light relief.

*You also tend to have two or three sub-plots going on in your series. Not just in *Blake* but also in *Dr Who*.*

Always. Always. I maintain it's the only way to write those things and they don't do it enough. Always my aim in episode one was split them. Get them all going off in different directions so the moment whatever *Dr Who* was doing was getting dull, or he was getting to the edge of a precipice, or his fingers were slipping, then cut to the other one. Cut to the other one so you've got this

intercut situation. I think what's happened with the *Dr Who* series now is that they haven't done that enough. I think they tell one story. They mainline it, following Tom Baker, and there isn't enough diversion of secondary and tertiary stories. I did that (using sub-plots) in *Blake* all the time.

*The central idea of *Blake's 7* is wildly subversive, isn't it?*

Well, the Daleks are Mark I. The Federation is the Daleks Mark II, if you like.

But the audience is asked to identify with rebels who are going round blowing up official installations—people who might be called terrorists.

In a way, yes, you're absolutely right. But I disapprove entirely of that kind of political action. That's why, in the first episode, I made The Federation so beastly and monstrous.

*In the *Blake* episode *Bounty*, starring the Irish actor T. P. McKenna, you had a community which was going to be torn apart by two internal factions fighting each other. The Federation's plan was to send in a supposed 'peace-keeping' force which was, in fact, an occupying army. That sounds like you were thinking of a particular, real, situation. Were you?*

Syria. It's a political device that happens all the time. That's what was happening at the time with Syria. (The Syrians sent a peace-keeping force into Lebanon.)

You were sneaking in a serious idea.
Yes. But I guarantee that 99.9% of people in the world who see that show won't see any political significance at all. Though, God knows, I've got to get all those people to relate to some truth, some honour or some dignity somewhere. It is not just people tearing around in spaceships, although that may appear to be what it is.

My *Blake* is the true figure of good. Do

you know the story of the Last Crusade?—I think it's the Third Crusade. All these guys set off and they were really going to wipe out these heathens and they got as far as Venice, I think, and ran out of money, ran out of boats and a million other things. And the Venetians said *Okay, fellows, listen. There's a Christian community over there. You've got the men and the arius, Go and wipe out that town and we'll give you the boats.*

So they wiped out the Christian community so that they could get the boats to wipe out the heathen community. It's that kind of deviousness that I see in The Federation. They have no regard for Man; they have regard only for the mechanics of Man—for that machine. It all works neatly and efficiently. It doesn't matter what the cost in manpower; it's the final solution. Get rid of the Jews and the world is going to be lovely; get rid of the gypsies and the world is going to be lovely. That metamorphosis doesn't ever work. Finally somebody has to be on the line that says I, at least, am honourable and I believe in my honour. The awful thing for me would be to find out that that honour is the true evil—which would be devastating and destroy my life.

Do you find that people don't treat you

"To the buff we are not in *Star Trek's* class, but we attempted more than *Star Trek* ever did."

seriously as a writer because you write 'fantasy'?

Oh, I'm never taken as a serious writer. That must be frustrating, isn't it? Not getting credit for hard work.

Well, perhaps. But if you're a popular entertainer, then that's the kind of badge you carry, I suppose. I don't mind that too much. I mean, I have yet to prove that I've got something very valid and good to offer. I've yet to do that. I think I will, because I'm learning my craft and I'm beginning to get it right now. I think it will come. I've always believed I'm a late developer, so I think it's just taking me longer. My intention always is to entertain because, if I fail to do that, I think I've failed to reach an audience. But within the context of primarily entertaining, I like to say some things that I believe are valid and good and honourable, if you like. I don't want to use the medium simply for adventure: I'd like to educate—Oh! I take that word back!—But, all right, having said it and retracted it, you know what I mean.

To intellectually interest?

(Laughs) I wish I'd said that. But, having said it, I would never actually let that be said aloud, in a way. I hope it's subversive in that sense. What they must see is a good entertainment. If it has an additional value, then terrific. That's really what I would like to achieve.



The *Survivors* traces the progress of 'handful of people who live through a global holocaust. In episode two, "*Genesis*," Greg (Ian McCulloch), and Annie (Myra Frances) discover the dead body of Vic (Terry Scully).

So, let's look at the future now. Have you changed anything in the second series of *Blake's 7*?

Yes, one of the characters is going to die. And, earlier, you mentioned your new project *Bedouin*.

It's a marvellous adventure story to be shot in the desert. I think twelfth century. The Crusaders. It's just possible that the Crusaders could be around in the period of my picture. It might be tenth century. I'm not sure.

This is a feature for the cinema, isn't it? Yes, with the projection that it could ultimately turn into a major American network hour-long special. The director is not assigned and the producers are a company who are based in Geneva. The man I'm

"In the second series of *Blake's 7* one of the characters is going to die."

working with is a super guy called Hal Vaughan; we've had very exciting discussions. I love getting into these kind of projects. This is the marvellous time when you're talking about it: everything is exciting—what can you achieve?

Can you tell me anything about *Bedouin*?

It honestly is a bit early days yet. It's a real adventure story and there is one aspect of it that will have some . . . You see, as soon as you say "Arabia" and "fantasy", you're into the Hollywood version of it, which is not what we have. It's something quite different. I'm merely saying that some of the strengths of the heavies in it come out of things that are long-forgotten and past. If you want to take the simplest level of hypnotism, they have that. But they also have much more potent powers from the



Roj Blake (Gareth Thomas) poses with some friends who appeared in the fifth episode of the first series of *Blake's 7*, "The Web".



The crew in the *Liberator* in control. Left to right: Vila (Michael Keating), Gan (David Jackson), Blake (Gareth Thomas), Jenna (Sally Knyvette) and Avon (Paul Darrow).

ancients to unite their particular force.

Powers from the ancients?

Possibly even—it has been said aloud in our discussions—Who taught the Egyptians to build the pyramids? . . . It's in our thinking. But, at this point, I'm not letting it really influence things until I know more the nature of the creature I'm dealing with. Is there a Wisdom? The Von Daniken kind of thinking. I disapprove of him entirely; but is there a Wisdom somewhere that there could have been from another source?

Why is money being put up for an Arabian story when there's no apparent market for Arabian stories?

Well, is there not? That's the point.

Everyone still wants to finance sharks and

creatures from outer space, don't they?

I started *Blake* at a time when I thought science fiction was going to be right and the fact that we opened the same night as *Star Wars* in this country seemed to prove that thinking right. Now there's this project *Bedouin*. It's a new look, it's a new background, a new dimension and I think it could be quite an interesting one.

Why do you think the time is right?

Well, perhaps it is simply the fact of new locations and backgrounds. Maybe it's that. I've been watching *How the West Was Won* (on TV). It's a good series. Again, it's telling the stories of about seven people, so you're intercutting the stories all the time. And we're back to real old-fashioned cowboys - and - Indians. It's story - telling again. That's the cycle that I believe is constantly coming up. Story - telling.

"I disapprove of the Von Daniken style of thinking entirely."

Whether we tell it against sand or against space, I want good stories.

*And after *Bedouin* what will you be doing?*

Well, I frequently wonder what I'm going to be when I grow up. I'm not sure. I know it will be writing. I think it will be writing. I mean, I'm really newly-excited about *Bedouin*. I'm high on it. It's my current drug. But I wouldn't like to think that for the next five years that is going to be . . . I've been too long with products. When I create a product of my own or I'm deeply involved with a product at its beginning, it takes three to five years out of my life and I should be doing more things. I've got more things I want to do. I mustn't stay with things for as long in future. I must move on and move on and find out where I need to go.

Complete Dalek index

In the preceding interview, Terry Nation mentions that he did not write all the Dalek serials for *Dr Who*. Here, we present a complete listing of Dalek stories in the series.

First Season, 1963-64

The Dead Planet (7 episodes by Terry Nation)
The blond Thals and mechanical Daleks have survived an atomic war on the planet Skaro. The Thals, after generations of mutation, have become perfect human specimens. The Daleks are creatures who have lost the use of their bodies and limbs: they can only move and survive inside their protective metal casings, powered by static electricity from the metal floors of their city. The Doctor lands on Skaro with his human assistants, Susan, Ian and Barbara. They try to help the starving Thals but are tricked by the Daleks, who kill the Thal leader. In a counter-attack on the city, the Doctor and the Thals defeat the Daleks by cutting off their source of electrical current. (The story was later made as a feature film *Dr Who and the Daleks* in 1965.)

World's End (6 episodes by Terry Nation)
The Doctor, Susan, Ian and Barbara land in London in the year 2164 AD. The Daleks have successfully invaded Earth and turned most of its inhabitants into Robomen (human robots) by clamping metal control discs on to their heads. Other human slaves have been transported to a vast mining complex in Bedfordshire. The Daleks have discovered a crack in the planet's shell and aim to remove the Earth's core, replacing it with a magnetic power system so that they can pilot it anywhere in the Universe. The Doctor and Ian are captured by Robomen and taken to the Dalek leader, who tries to robotise the Doctor in a flying saucer parked in Trafalgar Square. Ian escapes to Berkshire and faces the Daleks' man-eating pet Slyther. Susan and a freedom-fighter, David Campbell, destroy the Daleks' radio network with a bomb. This immobilises the Daleks' control and the Doctor successfully urges the Robomen and slaves to rise up against their masters. The Daleks are defeated, Earth is saved and Susan stays behind to be with her new love, David Campbell. (The story was later made as a feature film *Daleks—Invasion Earth 2150 AD* in 1966.)

Second Season, 1965

The Executioners (6 episodes by Terry Nation)
The Daleks are infuriated at the Doctor's interference in their plans. So they use a time machine to follow him through time and space with the intention of exterminating him. There is a brief encounter on the desert planet Aridus. Then the Tardis lands on the Empire State Building, the Marie Celeste, a gothic castle containing Dracula and the Frankenstein monster—and finally on the mechanoid planet Mechanus. The Tardis and crew are captured and meet Steven Taylor, the sole survivor of a spaceship crash and the only human on the planet. The Daleks arrive, leave their time machine and start to fight with the Mechanoids. Ian and Barbara steal the Dalek time machine and use it to get back to their own time. Steven and the Doctor escape in the Tardis.

Third Season, 1965-66

Mission to the Unknown (1 episode by Terry Nation)
The Space Special Security Service has heard rumours of mysterious happenings on the planet Kembel. They send agent Marc Cory to investigate, but his crew are killed one-by-one by the alien horrors which infest the planet. However, Cory does discover the planet's

secret: the Daleks are there in force and they intend, once and for all, to destroy the human race on Earth. (This single episode re-introduced viewers to the programme after a Summer break. It was followed by an un-related 4-part story, set in Troy, then by *The Nightmare Begins*.)

The Nightmare Begins (12 episodes by Terry Nation)
In 4000 AD, the Doctor lands on the planet Kembel, where Space Security agent Bret Vyon is trying to warn Earth about the Dalek threat. But he is mistaken for a traitor and shot. The Tardis then lands on the volcanic planet Tigus, pursued by The Meddling Monk (from Dennis Spooner's previous 4-part *The Watcher*). Finally, back on Kembel, the Doctor activates the time-destructer, wiping out the Dalek invasion, but killing space agent Sarah Kingdom.

Fourth Season, 1966-67

The Power of the Daleks (6 episodes by David Whitaker)
The Doctor has been re-juvenated and now has a totally different appearance and personality. (Patrick Troughton took over from William Hartnell.) The Tardis lands on Earth colony Vulcan in 2020 AD. The Doctor finds two inanimate Daleks in a spaceship stuck in the Mercury Swamp. He discovers that the planet's chief scientist Lesteron has removed a third Dalek, has re-activated it and plans to use all three as servants. However, rebels intend to use the re-activated Daleks to help them overthrow the colony's governor. Unknown to everyone, the Daleks have set up a reproduction plant on a conveyor-belt system: they plan to exterminate all humans. But the Doctor finds their power-source and turns it against them.

The Evil of the Daleks (7 episodes by David Whitaker)
On Earth in 1967 AD, the Tardis is stolen and driven off in a lorry. The Doctor and his companion Jamie follow it to an antique shop selling Victoriana. The shop is owned by Edward Waterfield, who takes Jamie and the Doctor back to London in the year 1867. It turns out that the Daleks are holding Waterfield's daughter prisoner. With her as hostage, they force the Doctor to run an experiment on Jamie, registering every emotion he shows while Waterfield's daughter Victoria is rescued. The resultant "human factors" are injected into three new Daleks so that they will be able to win future battles against humans. But the experiment is a failure: instead of human cunning, the Daleks have learnt playful friendliness from Jamie. All the Daleks are re-called to their home planet of Skaro, where their leader tells the Doctor to take the "Dalek factor" (the impulse to destroy) back to Earth. The Doctor is processed in a machine which transforms humans into mental Daleks. But, as the Doctor is not a human, the machine fails and the Doctor is able, instead, to humanise the Daleks.

Seventh Season, 1972-73

The Day of the Daleks (4 episodes by Louis Marks)
Peace diplomat Sir Reginald Styles is attacked by guerrillas, who escape to their 22nd century world, taking Dr Who with them. In the 22nd century, Earth is ruled by the Daleks and their ape-like slaves, the Ogrons. The guerrillas say they kidnapped Styles because he murdered world leaders in the 20th century, thus making the Doctor vulnerable to Dalek attack. By kidnapping him, they will prevent the deaths of those world leaders and thus prevent the Dalek invasion. But the Doctor realises the real

murderer is a guerrilla left behind in Styles' 20th century house. So he returns and evacuates the house while the guerrilla destroys the pursuing Daleks with a Dalekanium Bomb.

Planet of the Daleks (6 episodes by Terry Nation)
The Doctor is pursuing the Daleks and lands on the planet Spitzboden, but then falls seriously ill. His companion Jo sets off for help and meets Thals (see *The Dead Planet*) who are on a suicide mission to destroy the Daleks. Jo herself contracts a fungus disease and is cured by a friendly, but invisible, native. Survivors of a crashed Thal spaceship tell the recovered Doctor that there are 12,000 Daleks on the planet, immobilised by the cold. The Thals activate a bomb, releasing an ice volcano which will freeze the Daleks for centuries.

Eighth Season, 1973-74

Death to the Daleks (4 episodes by Terry Nation)
A space plague attacks all living creatures in the galaxy. The only antidote is a mineral oil which is only found on the planet Exalion—the home of a savage, degenerate race, who rejected all technology after their perfect, automated city expelled them. The Doctor and his companion, Sarah Jane, find themselves caught up in the middle of a battle between humans, Daleks and Exalions for possession of the vital antidote. Helped by a friendly native, the Doctor saves the antidote for humanity and one of the humans sacrifices his life while blowing up the Dalek spaceship.

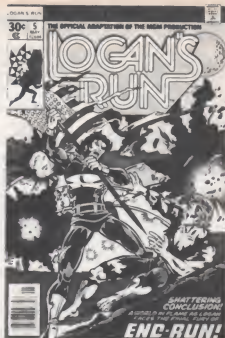
Ninth Season, 1974-75

Genesis of the Daleks (6 episodes by Terry Nation)
The Time Lords send the Doctor, with companions Harry and Sarah Jane, back to the planet Skaro at the time when the original war between the Thals and Kaleds was reaching its crucial stage. The Doctor's mission is to prevent the birth of the Daleks but, when he lands, he is hunted by both sides. He eventually becomes the prisoner of Davros, the brilliant crippled scientist. Davros invents a mechanical outer-shell in which to house the creature into which the Kaleds will eventually mature, genetically crippled after centuries of warfare. But Davros becomes obsessed with his creation and gives the Daleks (mutated Kaleds) destructive powers and a ruthless intelligence which were not part of the original design. The Doctor helps lead a revolt of dissident Kaled scientists, but Davros helps the Thals to destroy his own people in an attempt to preserve the Daleks. Then he uses the Daleks to wipe out the Thal city and destroy the remaining Kaleds who oppose him. The Doctor manages to entomb Davros in his fortified bunker, where the Daleks turn on and kill their creator. In the bunker, the Daleks start to prepare for the day when they will emerge to rule the galaxy. The Doctor, who has only partially succeeded in his mission, is whisked away from Skaro by a Time Ring.

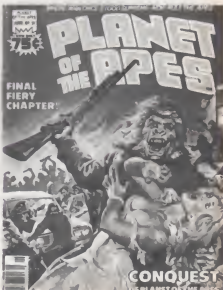
*Terry Nation also wrote one other story for the *Dr Who* series:*

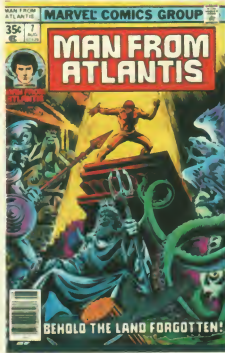
The Sea of Death (6 episodes by Terry Nation)
The Doctor, Susan, Ian and Barbara land on the island of Marinus, where the sand is glass and the sea is acid. The Tardis is captured by Arbitan, Keeper of the Conscience of Marinus—a machine that rules the island absolutely fairly. However, the four keys that make it work are lost and the Doctor goes off in search of them. When he returns, he finds that Arbitan has been murdered and the island conquered by Yartek, the ruler of the alien Voords. They force the Doctor to hand over the four keys. But one is an imitation and the machine explodes, blowing itself and the Voords to pieces.

MARVEL SF COMICS INDEX



Magazine	Numbers	Dates	Source
Planet of the Apes (B&W)	1-6 7-11	Aug 74-Jan 75 Mar 75-Aug 75	Planet of the Apes (20th Cent Fox) Beneath the Planet of the Apes (20th Cent Fox) Escape from Planet of the Apes (20th Cent Fox) Conquest of Planet of the Apes (20th Cent Fox) Quest on Planet of the Apes (new— bridges the gap between Conquest and Battle) Battle for Planet of the Apes (20th Cent Fox) Terror on Planet of the Apes (new) Reprint film adaptations from B&W magazine
Adventures on Planet of the Apes (colour)	1-21, 23-29	Aug 74-Feb 77 Oct 75-Dec 76	War of the Worlds (new) 2001: A Space Odyssey (MGM) 2001: A Space Odyssey (new) 2001: A Space Odyssey (new) Logan's Run (MGM)
Amazing Adventures (colour)	18-39	May 73-Nov 76	Doc Savage (stories adapted from the pulp)
2001: A Space Odyssey (tabloid)	1	Oct 75	Doc Savage (new)
2001: A Space Odyssey (colour)	1-10	Dec 76-Sep 77	Ster Wars (20th Cent Fox)
Machine Man (colour)	1-9	Oct 77-June 78	Ster Wars (exact reprints of above)
Logan's Run (colour)	1-7	Jan 77-July 77	Ster Wars (new)
Doc Savage (colour)	1-8	Oct 72-Jan 74	Ster Wars (reprints Ster Wars 1-3)
Doc Savage (B&W)	1-8	July 75-May 77	Ster Wars (reprints Ster Wars 4-6)
Ster Wars (colour)	1-6	—	Ster Wars (reprints Ster Wars 1-6)
Ster Wars (colour)	7-present	Jan 78-present	Ster Wars (reprints Ster Wars 1- present)
Marvel Special Edition (tabloid)	1	1977	Class Encounters of the Third Kind (Columbia)
Star Wars Weekly	1-present	1978	CE3K (reprints Marvel Super Special 3)
Marvel Super Special (colour)	3	1978	Island of Dr Moreau (AIP/DDA)
Marvel Special Edition (tabloid)	3	1978	The Deep (Columbia)
Island of Dr Moreau (colour)	1	Oct 77	The Land That Time Forgot (Amicus)
The Deep	1	Nov 77	Men From Atlantis (tv)
Marvel Movie Premiere (B&W)	1	Sept 75	Jaws II (Universal)
Man From Atlantis (colour)	1-7	May 78-Oct 78	Battlestar Galactica (Universal)
Marvel Super Special (colour)	5	1978	Battlestar Galactica (Universal)
Marvel Super Special (tabloid)	8	1978	
Battlestar Galactica (colour)	1-present	Mar 79-present	







SUPERMAN

THE MOVIE

After our look at the making of the movie last issue *Starburst* now casts a critical eye over the movie itself, in this review by John Brosnan.

Well, I did and I didn't. Believe a man can fly, that is, as the *Superman* publicity machine assured me I would.

Many of the flying scenes *are* very good and at times the illusion was perfect (and I'm happy to say that I never spotted one wire) but there was something wrong somewhere and it wasn't until afterwards that I realized it had to do with the way Superman took off. Most of the time he didn't bound or leap into the air, like George Reeves used to do in the old tv series, but simply rose slowly into the air like a helicopter. This gave the impression that he wasn't flying by means of his super-strength but was instead utilising some sort of anti-gravity force.

Of course if you want to be logical, the way Superman flies in the comic books suggests that he is doing just that: long-gone are the days when his flying was just a super leap permitted by Earth's weak gravity in comparison to his home world of Krypton. In fact, as Superman's abilities have become closer to omnipotence since his first appearance 40 years ago the rationale behind them has become more and more convoluted involving yellow suns and all sorts of other factors. In the movie Jor-El makes a weak attempt to explain the situation by saying that his son's powers are both a result of his dense molecular structure (yet later we learn he is of normal weight) and the rays from Krypton's sun—all of which goes to show that trying to be logical about Superman is an exercise in futility. You've just got to accept him as he is.

Anyway, apart from the flying, how was the rest of the movie? Pretty good, I thought. Not as good as I'd hoped but certainly the best attempt so far to put a comic book super-hero on the screen. Fortunately the director, Richard Donner, decided to treat the whole thing as straight as possible and though there is a lot of comedy and some camp humour remi-

niscant of the *Batman* tv series of the mid-sixties, the fact that Superman himself comes across as a *believable* character is the film's main strength. (I hate to imagine what would have happened if the film's original director, Englishman Guy Hamilton, who had wanted to turn it into a complete send-up, had remained with the project: it was vital that the creative, guiding force behind *Superman* should come from an American who would be familiar with Superman as part of his cultural background.)

The film's other main strength is Christopher Reeve who plays Superman. He is almost perfect for the part (he's just a shade too young) and I can't think of anyone else who would have worked as

well though I used to think that Clint Walker (tv's *Cheyenne* back in the early 1960s) would have been ideal. And Charles Bronson would be perfect as Bizarro—he wouldn't have to wear make-up.

It would have been so easy for the film makers to have chosen some muscle-man for the job of wearing Superman's blue suit but instead they wisely cast a real actor for the part and then turned him into a muscle man, with the result that Reeves provides a solid core for the movie with both his dignified portrayal of a super being and his subtly humorous impersonation of mild-mannered clumsy Clark Kent—but let's hope he hasn't type-cast himself well and truly for good.



Jor-El (Marlon Brando) and Lara (Susanna York) send their son to earth, so that he will survive the destruction of their home planet, Krypton.



Superman! Defender of the weak and crusader for justice. Above right his mild-mannered alter-ego

Superman is going to be a tough act to follow.

Superman purists will no doubt quibble with the changes that the film makers have made to the familiar Superman legend, and with some justification I feel. The Krypton of the comic book has been turned into an ethereal ice world with most of the population apparently living in a single city within a crystal plateau, all of which looks very impressive ("I didn't want to make Krypton look like a 1938 comic book with the Grecian columns and the gold chairs and the space ships that dropped dust out of their asses as they went by," said Donner). As in the original story, Jor-El's warning that the planet is doomed is ignored by the High Council, but whereas in the comics Krypton was destroyed when its molten core erupted, in the film the planet is destroyed in a collision with its sun. This

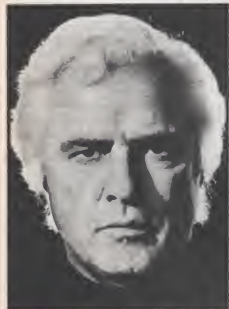


does lead one to ask the embarrassing question as to why all those super brains on Krypton didn't even notice that their planet was heading towards the sun until the actual day of contact. After all, it's not the sort of thing you could easily miss seeing...

As per legend Jor-El (a convincingly sincere performance by Marlon Brando) succeeds in sending his baby son off into space towards Earth where he eventually crash lands near a middle-aged American couple called Jonathan and Martha Kent. There is some wince-making dialogue here —on finding a baby in the space vehicle Martha reacts by simply saying: "We've prayed and prayed for the Good Lord to send us a child and now he has..." as if this was a common method for human progeny to be delivered. There's then a jump in the narrative to when the baby has grown into a teenager and railing over

the fact that he must keep his powers a secret (there's an embarrassing sequence when we see him out-running an express train—the effect is so unconvincing it makes the Bionic Man's slow-motion runs look good). There's no suggestion of him acting as the Superboy of the comics though Lana Lang, his girl friend in the Superboy stories, makes a brief appearance.

"You've been put on this Earth for a purpose, I know it," Pa Kent (*Glenn Ford*) tells him shortly before dropping dead. This suggestion of Divine Intervention and the mystical tone that the film assumes when young Clark Kent discovers a crystal device containing a message from his father, suggest that the movie may really be about the Second Coming instead of a comic book character. This mood is continued when the youth makes a pilgrimage to the North Pole, throws the crystal into the sea and watches as giant



Above: Marlon Brando plays Superman's father, Jor-El. Above right: Superman soars high above the Metropolis skyline.



Jimmy Olsen (*Marc McClure*) and Lois Lane (*Margot Kidder*) is marvellous thanks to the excellent performances by all concerned, not least of all by Reeve himself as the bespectacled, shy Clark Kent whose first request to his new boss Perry White is that half his salary be sent home each month to his mother in Smallville, much to the amusement of the cynical Lois. "Are there any more like you back home?" she asks sarcastically. "No, not really," Clark replies. Also great fun are the sequences where Superman reveals himself to the city, first rescuing Lois from a helicopter (great effects!) and then going on a crime-fighting spree, snatching up criminals and delivering them to the police.

It's during this section that Lex Luthor is also introduced and I'm afraid I con-

sider him to be one of the major flaws in the movie. The way the character is written, and the way Gene Hackman plays him, is very enjoyable but he jars with the mood of the rest of the film. With his garish costumes, his bumbling assistant, Otis (*Ned Beatty*), and his slinky female companion, Eve (*Valerie Perrine*), he reminds one too much of one of the campy villains featured in the Batman tv series, like the Penguin or the Joker. He's undeniably amusing—he gets most of the best lines—but it seems a mistake for the film makers, after spending so much of the film's running time on establishing Superman as believable character, to make the chief villain so obviously *unbelievable*. Like Superman, Luthor should have been treated relatively straight and played as a

crystalline structures magically rise out of the water. This turns out to be the Fortress of Solitude but bears little resemblance to the one we know and love in the comic books. Inside the Fortress the young Superman establishes a kind of spiritual contact with his dead father and is taken on a quick tour of the universe which includes a visit to Krypton's sun . . . we then see him emerge fully-grown from his ice palace and dressed in his Superman gear for the first time (as editor Perry White wonders later in the film: Where did he get the costume?).

Fortunately all this portentous mysticism comes to an end at this point and the movie really gets into its stride with Clark Kent's arrival at the Daily Planet office in the city of Metropolis (which bears a striking resemblance to New York). The sequence where we meet such characters as Perry White (*Jackie Cooper*),



Is it a bird? A crowd of bystanders cheers as Superman makes his debut to rescue Lois Lane.



Top: Superman (Christopher Reeve) eyes Otis (Ned Beatty) warily in the underground lair of Lex Luthor (Gene Hackman). Centre: Lois Lane (Margot Kidder) lands an exclusive interview with the Man of Steel. Above: This is a job for Superman. Clark Kent makes the startling transformation.

more overtly sinister character (Telly Savalas would have been my choice for the part...).

One sequence in this part of the film that works particularly well, and which possesses a genuine sense of wonder, is where Superman takes Lois on a night flight over New York and then up through the clouds. Lois's growing exhilaration after her initial fear is successfully communicated by Ms Kidder, as is her sudden shock when she lets go of Superman's hand and suddenly finds herself plummeting earthwards. The flying effects are quite convincing here and the only thing that spoils it all is the rather banal accompanying song.

From then on the movie is concerned with the unfolding of Luthor's plan to cause half of California to fall into the sea by sending a nuclear missile into the San Andreas fault ("We all have our faults and mine's in California," says Luthor). The sequences involving the nuclear missiles, the earthquake and Superman's efforts to avert the catastrophe are all very spectacular (the effects in these sequences vary in quality but some are brilliant) but not really as entertaining as the Metropolis sequences—I would have preferred to see more of Superman's dual life in the city which is really the film's chief source of fun. But there's sure to be more of that in Part 2, along with the battle between Superman and the escaped super-criminals from Krypton who we saw imprisoned within the Phantom Zone at the start of the film (though people not familiar with the comic books may have been somewhat mystified as to what was going on). If Part 2 is as entertaining as Part 1 it's going to be well worth waiting for.

Superman: The Movie (1978)

Marlon Brando (as Jor-El), Gene Hackman (Lex Luthor), Christopher Reeve (Superman/Clark Kent), Margot Kidder (Lois Lane), Ned Beatty (Otis), Jackie Cooper (Perry White), Glenn Ford (Pa Kent), Trevor Howard (First Elder), Susannah York (Lora), Phillis Thaxter (Ma Kent), Jeff East (Young Clark Kent), Marc McClure (Jimmy Olsen).

Directed by Richard Donner, Story by Mario Puzo, Screenplay by Mario Puzo, David Newman, Leslie Newman and Robert Benton, Edited by Stuart Baird, Photographed by Geoffrey Unsworth, Production design by John Barry, Music by John Williams, Special effects by Colin Chilvers, Optical visual effects by Roy Field, Mattes and composites by Les Bowie, Model effects by Derek Meddings, Makeup and special visuals by Stuart Freeborn, Executive producer Ilya Salkind, Produced by Pierre Spengler. Distributed by Warner Bros.

Title: 143 mins.

Cert: A

An in-depth article on the Superman special effects, including interviews with three of the effects men concerned, is to follow in the next issue of *Starburst*.

STARBURST LETTERS

I see that Starburst is now published by Marvel Comics Ltd and they seem to be fairly successful (!) and therefore Starburst should be. At least I hope so. That only leaves one worry: because Marvel usually deal exclusively with comic strip publications, Starburst may become comic strip orientated. Please, not that! I much prefer written short stories (like the one in the first issue by Harry Harrison).

On the whole Starburst appears to be very intelligently written, well put together and well presented. On the whole, I thought the cover was particularly striking (even though I didn't like the photo) with the yellow background and red title.

I didn't agree with everything, most especially the Incredible Hulk feature. Wonder Woman I regard as one of those things that tends to get more than monotonous after the first few episodes (the same can be said for the Six Million Dollar Man and the Bionic Woman). Actually I regard Wonder Woman as trash and an insult to my intelligence. The storylines of this programme are so predictable, so corny that I wish the villains would win for a change!

I find the letters column most interesting and if you ever remove this part of Starburst I will be more than just annoyed. I think a letters column is an integral part of a good sf magazine.

lee Churchward, Torquay, Devon.

Although I admit I found the first three issues of Starburst to be generally quite good, I refrained from commenting on them, for the simple reason that I was convinced that it would never last. . . . I mean just look at all the many, many other media sf magazines that have appeared only to disappear since the release of Star Wars. Suffice to say that I was grinning smugly when Starburst 4 did not appear—it's gone, I thought, and I'm not surprised.

So imagine just how surprised I was when attending the first British Fantasy Film Convention to learn that Starburst was, in fact, alive and well and living at Marvel.

Was it worth it? Was Starburst worth it?

Yes. It was worth it. . . . I can definitely say that with Starburst 4. As I said earlier, I thought the first three issues to be quite good, but I wasn't too struck on them. Issue 4 is quite a different magazine though: far superior to the earlier issues. In SB 4 you seem to have got the right combination—this is "science fiction in tv, cinema and comic", as the banner claims. . . . issues 1 to 3 were not.

SB 4 is visually a better magazine as well. Why the improvement? I don't really think the superior quality is because you are now "a Marvel Monthly", no, not at all—more a determined effort by all contributors to give a better variety of contents.

I am now definitely excited about Starburst, something I could not claim about the first three issues. You have something here, something good, and I think the reason for Starburst 4's success, and the way to ensure success on later issues, was spelt out in the letters column by Peter Farman of Maidenhead, when he said SB was "a magazine which can knock as well as praise sf". This is it—you are a critical magazine; if something's good then you say it's good, if something's rubbish then you say it's rubbish. This, together with the overwhelming enthusiasm which is apparent behind Starburst, is your formula for success, a terrific driving force.

Never before have I been so thoroughly hooked on a magazine, with one exception (an obscure magazine called *Hosoe of Hammer*; anyone out there remember it?), and I wish you every success.

Paul Richmond, Darlington, Co Durham.

I was startled and delighted to see Starburst on sale once again. However, my pleasure soon fizzled. What with *Hiero's Journey*, *The Silent Flute*, *Lord of the Rings*, *The Hobbit*, *Marla* and the comic strip, the mag looked like a *Sword and Sorcery/Kung Fu Monthly*—too much of the same thing for one issue. Even worse, the features were non-events—*The Hobbit* probably won't be seen over here, *Lord of the Rings* isn't out yet, *Silliphant's* projects future is uncertain, as is *Boorman's* *Marlin*.

Stirling Silliphant is "one of the best screenwriters in Hollywood." Really? After *Shaft*, *Longstreet* and *Irwin Allen's* cornflake epics (small-mind films on a big scale?) he may have needed the money, but why churn out clichéd drivel like *The Swarm*, with its cardboard characters and comic-strip nemeses to match—"Brad Crane" and "Dr. Krim". Silliphant's waffle about *Hiero's Journey* doesn't sound very mind-boggling—more like 60s Flower-power mysticism gone stale. Doug Trumbull's association with the project is odd—especially as he was supposed to be doing his own project *Brainstorm* (SB/3) and developing a revolutionary filmic concept. Finally, a \$3 million budget is a paltry sum for an epic mindboggler, especially from Columbia, reaping in CE3K profits. We had prominent poster artwork for *The Silent Flute* (which is hardly relevant because it's not even mentioned in the interview) plus one photo and a three-word review—"an excellent fantasy". I'd prefer a full review. The interview was a big let-down after the marvellous ones with Anthony Daniels and Harrison Ford in issues 2 and 3. I hope that the promised interviews with Debra Pross, Steven Spielberg, Douglas Trumbull, John Dykstra, and John Carpenter will appear soon.

The issues best features were the *War of the Worlds* article, and *Things To Come* which managed to be more informative and witty than ever. Also much appreciated were the *Book World* and *Record World* columns. Despite my disappointment over No. 4 I eagerly await the next monthly (hurrah!) issue.

Starburst shares the market with the *American Starlog* (now it has British distribution), and I'm relieved to see that mention of the mag is not taboo. The two mags can exist side by side—there's room enough for both. Starburst's advantages are that it provides estate critical reviews; being British is accessible to its readers; and can provide information about the British release dates.

In the past few years American tv has churned out cheap-tack sci-fi drivel—*Fantastic Journey*, *Loveable Man*, *Gamali Man*, *Mao from Atlantic*, *Logan's Run*, all of which flopped, and were snapped up by BBC and ITV. Now that it seems that quality, expensive, high-rating sf has made it on to U.S. tv, ITV and the Beeb aren't interested. The smash-hit *Battlestar Galactica* series will be in cold storage until well after Universal has released the adited-down pilot in the cinema, but what about all the other shows? Starburst can provide an invaluable service for its readers by bazzing ITV and the Beeb to find out when the programme buyers (the folk who bought all those conveyor-belt cop series over the past 5 years) are going to come to their senses.

Requests time: (1) How about a review of *Demolition Alley*, after the previews in issues 2 and 3. I was astonished to find it had suddenly turned up at my local cinema the other day (it usually takes months for movies to make their way up north to Lancaster), and I haven't read a single newspaper review or seen a film clip on the telly film prog. I'm currently debating whether to pay out £1.20 and gamble on it being worth watching.

(2) Let's please have an article on 2001, Kubrick's 60s wonder. It's as good a time as any, now it's on re-release (I saw it recently), and the film's aesthetic influence is tremendous—both *Ster Wars* and *Cloze*

Encounters borrowed from its imagery. There's a potential *Starburst* interview too—Welly Veevers, the British special effect veteran who supervised the model effects, and who has been working on *Superman* recently. A specific 2001 question—what happened to the beautiful spacecraft models, especially the 8 foot and 54 foot long "Discovery" models? (Trak's "Enterprise" is displayed in a Washington museum). A 2nd specific question—the BBC recently bought 2001 for tv screening—when can we expect to see it?

(3) A John Brosnan article on the *Superman* special effects, interviewing the British team. Welly Veevers, Les Bowie and John Richardson.

(4) Information, please about 2 new British sci-fi shows in the pipeline—ATV's comic-strip sounding *Sapphire and Steel* with Joanne Lumley and David McCallum, and Thames' new *Quatermass* production with John Mills.

(5) I note several requests for *Space 1999* in issues 2 and 3. The show had to contend with much anti-sf prejudice (as Lucas did when trying to finance *Star Wars*) and was refused by the American networks in 1975, having to be sold to individual local stations "in syndication", on awkward and costly movie. In Britain ITV refused to give it publicity and full networking, which were later accorded to the *Avengers* and *Saints* revivals. Also, *TV Times*, which filled its pages with *Avengers* and *Saints* articles, altogether ignored *1999* despite its big financial success abroad (it topped the ratings in France). *1999* badly needed a science advisor, the stories were poorly thought out and tended towards muddled mysticism, the episodes lacked pace, and the lead characters were ciphers, despite a competent set of actors.

Space 1999 was, however, a technical triumph, and its special effects (by Brian Johnson, now on *Star Wars 2*) and production design have been praised even by the show's sterner critics, and made it the most visually exciting of tv series ever (though the title may now be taken by Dykstra's *Galactica* work). I would think most reviews of *1999* would be more or less in line with what I've said. What would be welcome though, is a Gerry Anderson appraisal of the series, and where it went wrong, plus lots of photos, reflecting its visual excellence.

In conclusion, I'd like to wish Starburst every success now that it is on a regular monthly sale.

A. G. Morris, Skerton, Leincs.

On the Silliphant points you raise, remember that there's more than one man involved in the end product of a movie. It constantly angers me to see writers praised or slammed for their movies. Unlike novelists, their work goes through many stages of editing, re-writing, actor/director/producer/budget cuts, and so on. More often than not, little can remain of the original writer's concept. Yet he alone is praised or attacked for the whole story from concept to finished footage. Still, that's showbusiness.

Just about everything else you mention we're actually working on. John Brosnan has completed his piece on the *Superman* special effects and interviews, *Quatermass 4* and *Sapphire & Steel* news to come, Gerry Anderson article in the pipeline, and 2001 was covered last month.

How's that for service?

Send all comments and queries to us at:
STARBURST LETTERS,
Jedwin House,
205-211 Keston Road,
London NW5.

Starburst Preview

MESSAGE *from* SPACE

Special preview by Tony Crawley

WELL, now . . . ! Forget *Space Cruiser* (which, in the circumstances, is not easy), of there comes Tokyo's multi-million dollar response to George Lucas, Doug Trumbull, old uncle Stan Kubrick and all. Science-fiction, Japanese style. Minus cartoon characters. Oh, I don't know though. . . .

What we have here is . . . *The Magnificent Seven* (well, eight) meets *Star Wars* for a *Star Trek* on a *Space Cruiser* in *Space 1999* (give or take the odd galactic millenium). And yes, the script is about as muddled-some as you might expect from such a conglomeration of launching-pads.

If nothing else, though, this film proves that George Lucas (and his conglomerations) will have to quit trying to sue everyone daring to make sci-fi or space fantasy movies. George will have to accept it as a fact of life, a measure of international respect for his bonanza movie—that much of *Star Wars* is now being



A pre-production painting of some of the fighter craft that appear in the film.



Dog-fight in space. Avoiding the floating space debris, the three space craft battle to the death.



A strange mixture of old and new. An armour-clad viking-like raider urges his men aboard the converted space-galleon.

taken—as the norm, the new traditions of space-operas.

In its effects, characters and overly complicated 'simple' story, Kinji Fukasaku's *Message From Space* owes about as much as it does to Flash, Kurosawa, Melies . . . the list of derivations is endless,

even if George's nose is in front.

Here again we have a planet seeking salvation from cruel invaders. Very cruel; to demonstrate their power they go one better than the Grand Moff Tarkin. They destroy the entire Moon.

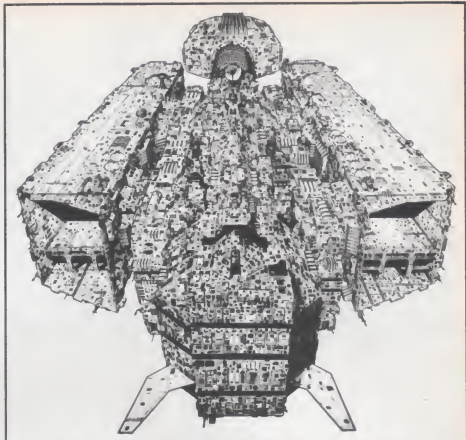
Here again is Carrie Fisher's tomboy princess, only now she's an armament-millionaire's tomboy daughter. Here, too, the robots are just as useful/playful and never over-done. The nightclub's robotic waiters, however, seem to have stepped right off the set of Woody Allen's *Sleeper*.

The film's younger heroes have also rolled off the self-same assembly-lines as Luke Skywalker: naive plus vigour. There's a Han Solo character as well, with a moustache, more cynicism, and somewhat older than Harrison Ford.

I mean, good lord, the Japanese try everything. . . . They've even roped in Japan's Columbia Symphony Orchestra to try to do battle royal with the LSO. John Williams can relax; Tokyo's Ken-ichiro Morika is good, but no match for Williams.

Then again, it's not all Lucas. . . . There's a generous helping of Gene Roddenberry, plus a liberal dollop or two of the Andersons, Gerry and Sylvia. Again, why not? These are the leaders in space opera. They set the trends, so they're hardly going to be ignored. Other film-makers can only follow their lead, jump on their bandwagon and try—at the very least!—to go one step further, one step beyond the basic rip-off stage.

The actual message from space takes the form of holy liab nuts. They're some form of holy fruit; looked like walnuts to me. They're flung up on high, straight into space by the chief of the invaded



The original, intricately detailed production drawing for one of the spaceships.

planet, Jillicia. Whoever finds these nuts about their person, in their pockets, in their space-craft, suddenly glowing bright orange in their hands, are divinely recruited to come to the aid of the planet.

In short, then, the title could read: **Nuts In Space.**

That would be a trifle cynical, even for me. Because I've got to admit that, even in a Japanese language print, 115 minutes of often absurd sub-titling, they try very hard. Too hard, perhaps, in trying to cover too much ground at once. A most creditable space romp, though; much better than any of Italy's cheap nonsense. The four Japanese gentlemen who created the epic (including director Fukasaku and his scripter, Hiroo Matsuda) pull out all the stops in a praiseworthy effort to make their movie one step for Japanese film-men, if not exactly a giant leap for movie-mankind.

For Japan, this is a real big-time venture. A kind of *Towering Inferno* \$7.5 million tie-up between two major Tokyo companies: Toei and Tohokushinsha. They imported Vic Morrow from Hollywood for the lead role (well, for top-billing anyway). He's the Brynner of this Magnificent Eight; though it's difficult to judge his performance when dubbed in Japanese . . . which takes some getting used to.

There's another pair of (apparent) Americans among the teenage saviours. Plus Tokyo's major current attraction,

Sonny Chiba, more usually a street-fighting man, and veteran Japanese star, Tetsura Tamba, still remembered fondly from two Lewis Gilbert movies: *The Seventh Dawn* (1964) and *007's You Only Live Twice* (1967).

Message bear *Star Wars* into the Tokyo box-office (the last opening for George's film in the free world) with a smash-hit premiere during April's Golden Week—when three national holidays collide inside a single week, and cinema managers can best be recognised as those gentlemen rubbing their hands together with the most glee. Salesmanship was terrific—including covering one entire side of Tokyo's Sony Building with a mammoth display, complete with sound effects.

The sound of the movie is great, too; Space Sound 4, no less, a new four-channel system. The actual film unfurled later than scheduled one morning at the Cannes festival, so late that most of the assembled multitudes started a slow handclap routine. The few Japanese on hand joined in, obviously mistaking annoyance for polite applause!

And so to the movie which, as I say, I caught in its original Japanese soundtrack print, with English sub-titles, and 15 minutes longer than the mid-Atlantic dubbed version to be sold around the world.

Jillicia is a planet—two million light years away from the solar system, on the verge of total obliteration from the evil





Shades of Space Cruiser Yamoto. An ancient galleon is converted into a very different kind of "spaceship".

invaders, the Gavanas. In a final bid to save his planet's people from destruction, Kido, the very Biblical-looking patriarchal leader of what appears to be a group of former C. B. DeMille extras, chucks eight liabe nuts into space to entice eight people brave enough to team up and save Jillicia.

Eight hardly seems a sufficient number in the circumstances, but maybe he only had eight nuts. Anyway, he also sends his grand-daughter, Emeraldita, and the warrior, Urocco, to check where and upon whom the nuts may land. It's a motley crew group of people, to be sure. And, unfortunately, juvenile to the extreme of one dimwitted chubby Nipponese buffoon impersonating Lou Costello... very badly.

When he's eventually located, sleeping off another binge, Vic Morrow becomes the group's natural leader. He may look like a tramp now, but he is a former space general of this particular Terran colony-planet, Millazalea. He'd been sacked earlier on for wasting money, to say nothing of an entire rocket, in his sentimental decision to 'bury' Bebu-2, his long-time though now defunct robot assistant, in deep space.

Morrow, then, becomes the brains. Kids like Shiro, Aaron and Jack, plus the tomboy princess type, Meia, supply surprising expertise. They can fling their spacecraft around like Andretti—illustrated in one fantastic outer-space version of *Bullitt* (better still, *Driver*), in which the lads out-drive, wit and manoeuvre the Space Patrol cops. Meia makes inspired use of the lads' crafts, affixing their ships to her own, and ending up with a very Andersens-like battle cruiser that can separate and divide into three speedy craft at the appropriate moment. They name this ship, Liabe. What else?

Meanwhile, as one must say in these kind of ventures... meanwhile, the Peter Cushing clone, Rocksair, tyrannical head of the dastardly Gavanas, turns his selfish sights on poor old Earth. (He doesn't just send off a squadron of spaceships: like *Space 1999's* Moon Base Alpha, he merely moves the entire Jillicia planet closer to Earth...) His first wave attack is ferocious and the puny Council of the Federation of Earth is no match for them. Without need of a nut, the council's chairmen ends for Vic Morrow to mediate on Earth's behalf.



Steel on steel. Hand to hand combat in a futuristic setting. These two adversaries obviously care little for modern devices like light sabres!

By which time, our munificent eight (including Prince Hans, son of the ex-king of Gavanas, and another liabe nutter) have set their plans and fight the great fight against the mighty Gavanas fleet. They realise the only way to rush the baddies' fortress, hidden deep in the planet, is to destroy Jillicia. Sure enough, despite the fierce gunfire and enemy spacecruiser formations, our trusty heroes take a leaf straight out of George Lucas's aerial textbook, and wheel in to bomb the very heart of the fortress...

Jillicia turns into a veritable sea of fire. Prince Hans crosses swords (just swords, no laser-thingies) with King Rocksai, and Kido, the elder, sends his young Jillicians away in the proverbial nick of time to maybe live a better life in a more peaceful part of the universe. (I can't help wondering what the old fellow thought of the heroes his liabe nuts found for him. He wanted to save his planet, after all, not have it blown to smithereens.)

Jillicia explodes before our eyes, the way the Moon went earlier. Yes, we have no Gavanas! The liabe nuts bloom—big, white flowers in space and the Jillicians and their heroes nip off for pastures, and probably, sequels new.

While the script is average, the dialogue is terrible and quite often risible ("I had him on Pluto" got a big laugh). I would expect the English (or American) dubbed 100-minute version to be better in terms of dialogue. Little, though, can be done about the curiously episodic storyline (rather like *Space Cruiser*). Characters are introduced and literally disappear for three "chapters" before returning with a smile... as if we're supposed to remember who the hell they are. I can find no editor's



An incredible model shot of one of the huge battle cruisers coming in for touchdown.

credit on the movie; this could explain everything.

In the end, though, whether made by Lucas or Spielberg, these films stand or fall on their effects. The unit organised and directed by one Nobuo Yajimi does a very impressive job, performing super miracles with what is officially designated "space-flying objects" designed by Shotaro Ishimori. My sole complaint in this area is the use of the by-now obligatory shot of space-craft passing overhead—over and over and over again! Apart from that, the Japanese effects are very impressive, the best I've seen outside Hollywood, and that's

saying a lot. Lucas could make *Star Wars III* over there with considerable ease.

But from all quarters of the film, and as witnessed first in *Space Cruiser* (I said it was impossible to forget that animation film), the Japanese creators have their feet planted firmly in their own chauvinistic traditions. There is always something of yesterday's Japan in today's Japanese sci-fi. A far greater link, in fact, with the past—history, ideals, and most of all lessons learned from the '39-'45 carnage: 'War killed my father and made your's rich'—than is noticeable in any other country's spacial output.

For instance (again, straight out of *Space Cruiser*), one of our hero's space vehicles is a kind of renovated boat. In the cartoon-film, it was a World War II destroyer; here it's a piratical twin-masted rigger, sails and all. A novel idea, combining yesterday and tomorrow, and such space-boats suit the higher-than-high seas very well.

At the same time, it does make one think that when the Japanese do reach the moon (as they will because they're fast running out of other export markets down here), they'll probably arrive in some form of renovated, outer-space Toyota . . .



Death and destruction. A spectacular special effects sequence starring three battle-cruisers and plenty of explosions.

Message from Space (1978)

Vic Morrow (as *Guardo*), Sonny Chiba (Urocco), with Philip Casnoff, Peggy Lee Brennan, Sue Shiomi, Tetsuro Tamba, Mikio Narita.

Directed by Kinji Fukasaku, produced by Banjiro Uemura, Yashinori Watanabe and Tan Takaiwa, created by Shotaro Ishimori, Masahiro Noda, Hiroo Matsuda and Kinji Fukasaku, screenplay by Hiroo Matsuda, photographed by Toru Nakajima, music by Ken-ichiro Morioka, with Japan's Columbia Symphony Orchestra, art director Tetsuzo Osawa, science fiction supervisor Masahiro Noda, Special effects directed by Nambu Yajima, space-craft designed by Shotaro Ishimori, special effects photographed by Naboru Takamashi, photographic effects Minoru Nakano.

A Toei Company/Tohokushinsha Film Company co-production.

Colour Time: 100 mins

宇宙戦艦ヤマト

SHINJI SUGANO

深作欣二監督作品

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美術 佐々木康
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編集 佐々木康
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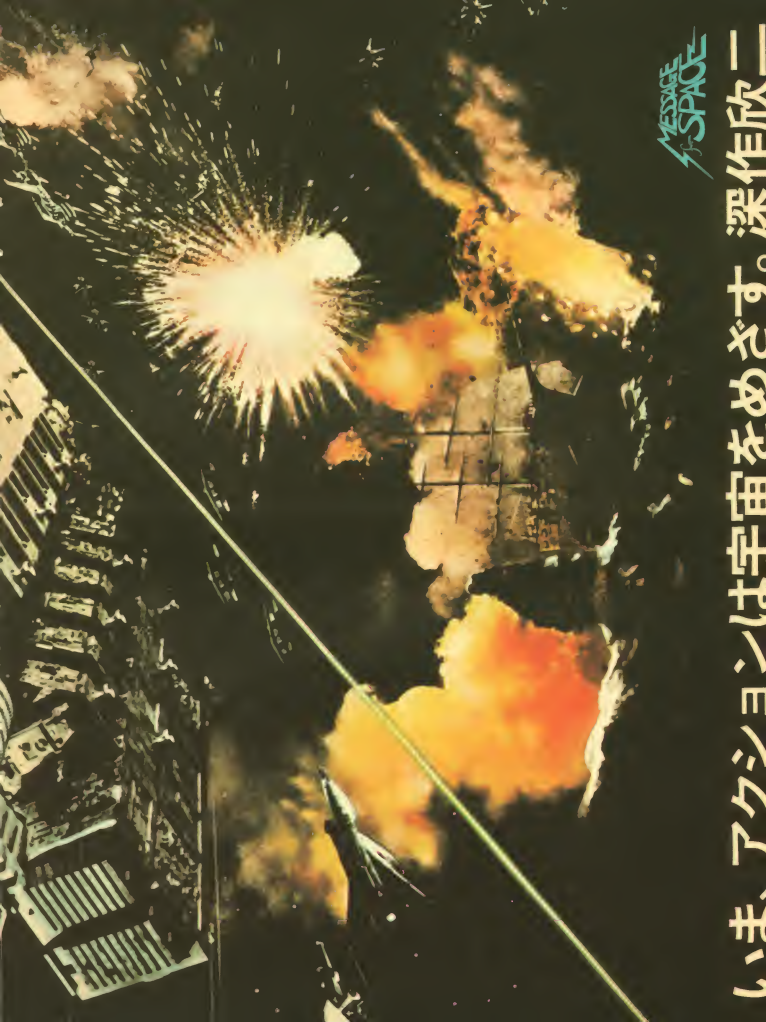
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MESSAGE
for SPACE

いま、アキシオンは宇宙をめざす。深作欣二

THE ROAD TO CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

DOUG TRUMBULL ON THE MOVIE OF THE YEAR



Last issue Douglas Trumbull spoke of how he first entered into the world of movie special effects and of his involvement with 2001: A Space Odyssey and Silent Running. This issue we learn more of Trumbull's role in the making of one of the most extraordinary movies of all time, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*.



Interview by Tony Crawley

Starburst: How exactly did you land the assignment to create the special effects for *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*?

Trumbull: Steven Spielberg had this script, which I liked very much. And I liked Steven. It was a nice situation. I felt I could work with him. There wasn't going to be any big ego problem about me having been a director and him being a director. We worked that out right away and came to an understanding about it.

We also agreed that I would shoot all the effects in 70mm and negotiated a deal for my company, Future General Corporation, to subcontract the entire visual effects job. One of the big incentives for me was that the picture would not only help me have the money to get a crew together, find some talents and train them through the movie, but to set up this facility for shooting very sophisticated optical effects.

Your own studio, in fact.

We found a 13,500 sq ft building near my offices at Marina Del Rey—which provides clean air—and set up workshops, photographic areas, optical printing facilities, animation stands, matte stands, high-contrast film development and everything else we required. And Spielberg located his editing rooms near

us in the Marina, about five minutes away. So now you have everything ready for your next movie!

I came away from the production with about nine 70mm cameras and a lot of really nice equipment and a super facility. We built, for instance, the world's largest portable front-projection screen—100 ft wide, 30 ft high, on wheels to move it around the dirigible hangar we used on location in Mobile, Alabama. We built an optical printer, modified a lot of

"Close Encounters of the Third Kind was really an extension of the stuff I did on 2001."

cameras and a lot of electronic control systems. This was the extension of your Magicam system? Right, what I call the MTS, Motion Tracking System. This was similar to what Jerry Jefferess and Al Miller of Interface Systems had built for John Dykstra on *Star Wars*—but they did it differently for me, with some extra camera modifications designed and built by my father, Don Trumbull. But yes, you're correct, it's an extension of stuff I did on 2001. Then we had very simple mechanical set-ups enabling us to

move one camera in one direction at a time. For *Close Encounters*, we needed something more sophisticated, so that the trajectories of objects could yaw and pitch, bank, roll, turn and fly off in all directions. Like fighterplanes. And, if I'm reading you correctly, this led to your MTS, a method of recording all the moves of the camera in Mobile, to let your cameras shooting miniature UFOs back in Marine Del Ray duplicate those movements exactly.

That's it. We used an eight-channel digital recording system for repeating moves—exactly. We had a cassette data storage system—just like the cassettes in your tape-recorder there. We put optical encoders, electronic sensors on the camera for pan, tilt, focus, dolly-track moves. So we could shoot on the stage in the Mobile hangar, record every move—put those recordings back into our equipment in Los Angeles—identical lenses on the same cameras—and could dial in a scale relationship to whatever size model we were shooting.

Obtaining perfect synchronisation of miniature and live-action photography, although it was shot miles and months apart.

Right. The result was total visual continuity down to 1/10,000th of an inch. The first time that's ever been done.



Scientists and technicians look skyward in disbelief as the Mother Ship thunders over their heads.

So how did you approach the visualization of the UFOs? Did you have problems deciding how they would look?

Well, shooting UFOs is like photographing God. . . . When you have to show a UFO, you're really dealing with people's very high expectations. People get a mind's eye view of things that is often very difficult to match. The interesting thing I felt about the whole UFO thing was that from all the many sightings, true or false, hopeless or not, they had a lot of common aspects. People reported bright lights at night . . . indistinct windows . . . glowing things.

Drawings made of such sightings were always very crude and photographs always were during the daytime. They looked like hub-caps thrown in the air—and sometimes they were! I'd never seen photographs of UFOs at night. What I wanted to capture on film was something so indistinct that the public could not fully comprehend what it was. Like a ghost. They would see these UFO things fly by, they would

"When you have to show a UFO you are really dealing with people's very high expectations."

be able to describe the same thing but they wouldn't be able to draw exactly what they had seen. Because it wasn't there!

We all know that the Mother Ship was supposed to appear to be around a quarter of a mile across but how big was the model you used?

Six feet in diameter, weighing about 400 lb. It was our largest miniature. Made of plexiglass, steel, plywood fibreglass and numerous thin, inch-diameter aluminium tubes—carefully drill with jeweller's drills to contain neon tubing. High voltage neon, plus tiny bulbs requiring quite a sophisticated multiple input system.

Hot to the touch, then.

Oh yeah, you could easily electrocute yourself fooling around with it. The neon went up through it, bending back down again—up through all those "buildings" on it. It was just a maze of neon and high-voltage wiring. *Just the one model?*

Hmm . . . well, there was a larger section of the underbelly portion, used once the ship had

settled into place, where you're looking at those big patterns underneath it. This was just a big perspex dome, 8ft. in diameter.

Where the people and the aliens come out?

Yeah, and that section of it—the angled black protrusion that opened up—was the only full-size part of the ship. We projected the moiré patterns on the dome from an off-camera projector, with a scanning light source to create the rippling lights around the edges.

How was the ship draped up?

Originally, it was simply to be a huge black shape, coming through the clouds—blocking out all light—then opening up and emitting lights.

Sounds reminiscent of the 2001 monolith . . .

We actually shot scenes with a huge black shadow passing over everyone—before we decided how the Mother Ship would look. We just knew something big was going to be up there and framed our camera angles to leave us a big opening to fill up later with whatever we came up with.

How did you want it to look?

My first concept was the underbelly section looking like a giant hemisphere, and we drew curved sections of a globe with colours and lights on it—then a circle of light from which the black block descends. We started designing the undersection first and worked backwards on what the rest would be like.

Where did the city of lights notion emanate from? Steven wanted the look of an oil refinery at night. I knew what he meant, there's one in Los Angeles, in El Segundo, and it's really beautiful at night. Hugh derricks, tubes, smoke, and lights all over it, millions of them.

I took that idea and added what I called a City of Lights—like the Manhattan skyline, say.

Or any major city as seen from a plane at night...

Ralph McQuarrie made some sketches. He blended these ideas and we picked the one we liked best and built the city-like miniature. Greg Jein supervised the construction with project manager Bob Shepherd—a symmetrically circular craft containing several tubular "buildings" and all this complex neon illumination. Larry Albright, who's a fine artist, often working in neon, joined us for the tubing. We were extremely lucky to get him.

How many designs did you go through before you got it right?

I'd say we went through half a dozen different

designs. It went through a lot of metamorphoses. As a matter of fact, it continued to metamorphose during photography. Everytime we went for a different camera angle—Dennis Muren supervising the photography—we saw that, well, it needed a couple of little more things here. We'd have a night crew come in and glue a bunch more stuff on to make the camera-angles look good. If you actually look at the model, it's quite different

"For the Mother Ship, Steven Spielberg wanted the look of an oil refinery at night."

from one side to the other.

Indeed, I've heard tell that if you see the movie enough times, you can make out a Bruce the shark, and R2-D2 or C3PO on the side, painted on or something? Is that right, or is my informant mad?

Actually, there's quite a bit more than that on it! But it doesn't show up in photography. The only thing I have been able to discern is the R2-D2—standing upside down on the rim of the Mother Ship. That's in the very first shot as it rises over Jillian's head. That's very easily noticeable.

The model-makers had a lot of fun keeping themselves awake at night, making extra parts for it. There are, among other things, a 1945 airplane on a sort of catapult launch—that's sort of tied in with the planes at the end (sic) of the movie.

Painted on?

No, these are actual little miniatures—from aircraft carrier model-kits or something. Just glued on for detail. But they're so far back within the intricacies of the model ship, you can't see them in photography.

There's also a Volkswagon van . . . and exact replica of Darth Vader's ship about half-an-inch in diameter, and all sorts of things. I can't remember them all.

The effect where the UFOs pass through the toll-booths looked like one of the slickest illusions in the whole movie, even though it didn't have the overall impact of the Mother Ship. Was this trick a lot more difficult than it looked?

I guess you're right. The toll gate was a very



Roy Neary (Richard Dreyfuss) gazes in awe at the of the Mother Ship.

challenging little problem. And an interesting solution. It goes by so fast, I'm incredulous myself that we spent so much energy on something that only takes about three seconds. A few frames!

Amazing because both the cop cars and the saucers go right through... Was that per script, or an added little trick of yours?

No, that was in the script. But we never figured out exactly how to do it until much later. That was actually shot after we came back from Mobile, Alabama—shot locally in Los Angeles. We just had to shoot a real toll-gate on location at night (*one of cameraman John Alonzo's numerous pick-up inserts, or 'mop-ups' as Spielberg called them*).

There was no way we could do any lighting effects on location. We'd done a lot in Mobile; whenever a saucer was going to pass over, we'd pan a lot of very bright arc-lights past the people, so there was a tie-in of lighting—from the ships we'd add later.

But, well, since the ships had to go through the toll-gate, there was no way to pan a light across there and make the shadows and the colours work right. On location, we just don't have the ability to do anything of any great complexity... you can't do it all out there; you have to use studios.

A controlled environment.

Right.

So what did you do?

We went ahead and shot the toll-gate in Los

"I had an idea the cloud effects could be created in a liquid environment, injecting some milky substance into a water tank."

Angeles—the police cars flashing through and everything. We made a lock-off shot. No effects whatsoever, figuring we'd work something out later.

And you obviously did.

We came up with the idea of building an exact duplicate of the toll-gate. We had to decide on one or two general approaches. We could build a miniature, based on scale plans of the real thing, built in scale, matching perfectly,



Jillian Guiler (Melinda Dillon) and her son Barry (Cary Guffey) duck as a drone ship hurtles above the highway.

and tie it in exactly with the live-action stuff with our cassette data recording system, same lenses and everything.

But we ended up actually using another technique. Instead of trying to duplicate the toll-gate, we projected a frame clip of the toll-gate negative onto a table, traced it off—as a forced perspective. Greg Jein and his crew of geniuses traced it three-dimensionally and built a forced perspective model booth. The miniature was very thin—only about 18ins. deep, but it was 4 to 5ft. wide. Looked very strange, warped out of shape. They built it out of plastic and perspex so we could pass lights through it—held from underneath.

And the road?

No road. We just left the road out. We painted the model medium grey, with little plexiglass windows, with enough reflective surface where there would be one. Then, we passed the model UFOs through it on a metal support from underneath. As they went through they lit up the toll-booths and cast all the right shadows and reflections in the tiny windows.

And via your cassette data system your cameras made all the exact same moves as the live-action shots. Then you married the two shots together—live-action superimposed with the model action. Brilliant!

Only way to have done it. You couldn't have just burned in a flying saucer. Would never have looked believable. We had to tie-in all the lighting, the reflections, everything that made it real.

Let's talk about the magical cloud formations that heralded the arrival of the Mother Ship. I gather they were formed by injecting liquid point into water tanks. That sounds almost too simple. Therein, surely, lies months of meticulous work.

You're right! It took forever.

How did you tackle the problem?

I had an idea they could be created in a liquid environment—injecting some milky substance into a water tank. We did some preliminary tests; it was one of the very first things we worked out right at the beginning of the filming. This was to satisfy ourselves that it could be done. Scott Squires, a young filmmaker who had just joined us at Future General, was put in charge of the project.

We just used some small fish tanks from the store down the street, and tried various

mixtures of water and paint to find that we could, in fact, inject a little cloud into the tank, which would last for at least a few seconds and appeared to be right. If you ran the camera at high speed, you could stretch the shot out by slowing down the speed later.

Beyond that, it was just a huge technical problem of how to do it on a large scale. With a lot of water in a large tank. Bob Shepherd built us a four-sided glass tank, 7ft. square and about 4ft. deep, rigged with some pretty sophisticated plumbing: swimming-pool filters, heaters, pumps and valves—to fill it and empty it as fast as possible.

We had two more large Redwood storage tanks, about 6ft. in diameter and 8ft. deep. We'd fill these with water, filter it, cool it or warm it, whatever we needed—to create certain temperature gradients in the water.

We'd fill this great big glass tank, and very carefully light it with a number of different lighting effects, some on a miniature overhead rail system above the water—so that there was a modulation of the lighting of the clouds and we obtained the right sort of moonlight nighttime effect. Then we'd shoot, setting up the camera to run at high speed, from 48 to 72 frames a second.

How did you inject the paint, though?

I wanted to be able to paint the clouds inside the tank, three-dimensionally. We had a large manipulator above the tank. We got this from Central Research Laboratories. It's a device used in atomic energy installations, a way of removing radio-isotopes from a hot room to a location outside that room. It's a mechanical, remote-controlled repeating manipulator: an arm that hangs down, you put your fingers inside it and you can grab things with it and move them around within an environment.

I rigged up a way of using one of those

"You could easily electrocute yourself fooling around with the Mother Ship model."

manipulators with a long probe—a thin black tube that would inject the paint into the tank, the near end of it. I could hold it in my hand outside the tank, and yet move this thing around anywhere I pleased within the tank. I would be outside, looking in, moving this thing around, injecting the paint where I wanted

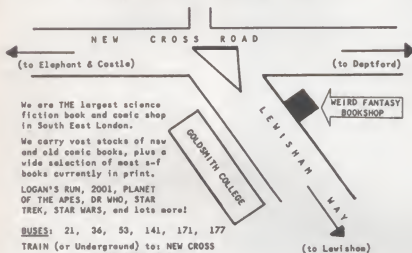


weird cloud formations that herald the arrival

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it—and it worked very well.

But very slowly, I imagine.

It's really a pain in the neck. To get the water absolutely clear. To get the exact right temperature. To get the paint-mix just right, too. The slightest mistake and it doesn't look right at all. And then it's clean-up time again. You have to drain the tank... clean the tank... filter some more water... fill the tank again... and by the time we'd done all of that... it took so long to clean and fill the tank, we could only shoot about twice a day. And we must have done it several hundred times. Just to get the right takes.

Obviously you didn't leave this until returning from the location, therefore?

Most of it was shot prior to going on location to Mobile, Alabama. All the cloud stuff had to be prepared in advance, to be used as process plates. We did come back and shoot some more later on—for Jillian's backyard,

"The toll gate effect was a very challenging little problem—and an interesting solution."

that was added in post-production... and a lot of other opticals. On and off, I suppose it took a year. Just a matter of enormous trial and error, a lot of expense, a lot of rolls of film that were shot with it just didn't look right, or move right.

What was the actual recipe for the clouds?

At the fish-tank stage, Scott Squires dabbled with various chemicals and paints from liquid antacid to vanilla malts. He finally hit upon a special mix of white poster paints... whipped up in an electric blender.

One sequence on the actual of *Close Encounters*, a sequence which was never filmed, intrigued me tremendously. Spielberg's idea was that the UFOs would begin to drop hundreds of "cuboid eggs". They were supposed to spread all over the Devil's Tower landing site, "rising, knotting, binding, squeezing, bleeding, glaring and finally bursting into golden galactic dust that races in all directions and right into us". So what happened to this in the final print?

"The Red Whoosh, the thing that kept following the saucers, was supposed to be one of the Cuboids."

Yeah, that was simply a sequence that wasn't shot. We did a lot of experimentation on it. Not only was it difficult to do, but it just didn't seem to be paying off as a visual concept.

Well, what is—or was... or come the sequel, will be—a Cuboid?

This was a thing that Steven had written... a sort of... I don't know how you'd say it. A kind of micro-UFO. A small box. An illuminated box which could just flip all over the place—like a swarm of bees or something. The Red Whoosh, you know the little thing that kept following the three main saucers, that was supposed to be one of those Cuboids. It was a little baby cuboid.

Always wondered what that red-dot thing was. Well, that was a little bit of Disney hanging in there. Like... the ugly duckling.

Or the seventh dwarf. So that was a cuboid?

There was quite an extensive sequence written about these Cuboids being the predecessors of



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the saucers. Or, put there by the saucers to check things out before they would come. They were also a sort of locomotion device—a safety device—for the Mother Ship. Very small objects with some sort of sensors. They would stack themselves up in vertical things and support the Mother Ship as it came down—a sort of assistance thing, like little baby tugboats.

You experimented with them, but did you shoot any Cuboids at all?

Oh yeah, there was actually some cuboid stuff shot on the set—full-scale. With little fibre-glass boxes, on wires, with quartz lights in them. It was just an unsuccessful effect. The only one, I think, in the entire film.

Can you introduce us to some of your Future General team?

Sure. Greg Jein made the Mother Ship miniature. He also supervised the construction of various miniatures we had of the Indiana and Wyoming countryside, built in forced perspectives, like the toll-gate. Greg is one of the best model-makers on the planet. Actually he's not working with the crew on the experiments with the new process right now, as the work doesn't involve miniatures—so he's working with Spielberg now on his next one, 1941.

Richard Yurich supervised the whole photographic and visual-effects operation. Dick, in my opinion, is the most gifted photographer working today. He supervised the matte painting, the optical printing and both the miniature and live-action photography. He did that all the way through *Close Encounters* with me—and he lived and worked here in

"Originally, the Mother Ship was simply to be a huge black shape, coming through the clouds."

London with me on 2001.

His brother Matthew Yurich is one of only two really good matte painters in the world, as far as I can make out. He did about a hundred matte paintings for Don Jarrel's matte-stand.

Our optical department is headed by Bob Hall, and Bob Swarth headed up the animation department. They all went to great efforts to use as many effects as original exposures with various new equipment, to ensure the highest possible quality. Alan Harding and Max Morgan did the superb animation camera work. Dennis Muren supervised the Mother Ship photography, and Bob Shepherd was the project manager. Our effects editor was Larry Robinson, in close integration with Mike Kahn's main unit editorial staff.

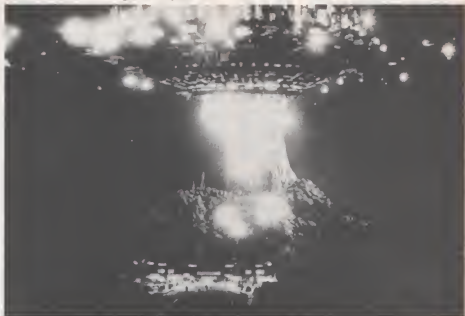
But you had nothing to do with Puck the alien? No, that was Carlo Rambaldi's project. He built it in Italy . . . but he won't tell anyone how. I would imagine Puck had a steel and aluminium framework, covered by his own very special kind of rubber material. He makes it just before shooting—the heat of the lights destroys it very rapidly.

And the other major mechanical effects—in Melinda Dillon's home and Dreyfuss' truck?

Roy Arbogast did all the physical effects—he worked with Steven on *Jaws*. Roy is not part of my company; he ran a separate operation. *I asked your opinion of Star Wars—what about Close Encounters itself? Or are you still too close to it?*

All I can say is I'm very proud of having been

The incredible special effects of Douglas Trumbull. The awesome Mother Ship rumbles over Devil's Tower in the breath-taking climax of CE3K.



*Douglas Trumbull (without a beard!) waits patiently as director Steven Spielberg lines up a shot during the filming of *Close Encounters*.*

involved with it. I think it's a very valuable film. It's going to have a lot of impact. It's a film that has something to say that's worthwhile for once.

Amen to that. How much did you spend on your side of the movie?

Almost exactly \$3,500,000.

Is it possible to estimate that in advance?

Well, I guessed the budget at \$3,000,000. I wasn't too far out.

Amazingly close, considering you can never be sure of the time, the work—and therefore the cost—of every supposedly simple effect.

That's the nature of the movie. I mean, a movie of this magnitude. And that's a problem I always have with the studios. They just don't seem to understand that this work is pure R & D—research and development. I mean, you're lucky if you even get a result. Most people would be amazed at the way we work in special effects. It's a very slipshod, shoot-from-

the-hip kind of business—ordinarily.

I don't work like that. We do a lot more planning. But, as most people know in R & D, nine out of ten times the experiment is a failure. In movies, it has to be a success. Fortunately, it only has to work once. It's still a hit and miss operation. You can try something a hundred times over. But if it works right once, you can take that one time and cut it into the movie. It never has to work again. So it is exactly like R & D—you never have to manufacture the product! The prototype simply has to work once.

Next issue, the third and final part of this mammoth interview, Starburst talks to Douglas Trumbull about what the future holds for him and about the revolutionary new special effects process he has developed for Paramount.

THINGS...TO...COME.....T

Disney in Space

Now that Mickey Mouse is fifty, Disney Productions are showing blatant signs of maturity. . . . Walt's company is keen to distribute other company's films, and will gamble more money than it has ever spent on a movie before, in order to catch up with the Hollywood space race. And we don't mean *The Kids From Witch Mountain Meet The Cat From Outer Space*. . . .

The \$17 million and ultra top-secret of project is a movie called *The Black Hole*, previously known as *Spece Probe*. Shooting begins in April, with a 122-day schedule occupying all four Disney stages, and two units working in harness—neither one knowing what the other is up to.

If the units begin to find out what's going on, certainly no one outside the close confines of director Gene Nelson and his editors will know the film's climax. Disney security is tighter than ever, but from the title alone, one fact is self-evident—the film is offering one explanation for what goes on in the dark side of space, beyond the black holes. We should all know the answer by Christmas. And the usual juvenile japes won't be in it, not with a far from Disneyesque cast headed by West German stage and screen star (and director) Maximilian



Actor Maximilian Schell stars in Disney's new space epic.

Schell, Anthony Perkins, Robert Forster, Joseph Bottoms, the ubiquitous Ernest Borgnine—and Yvette Mimieux as a last minute replacement for Jennifer O'Neill, injured in a recent car smash.

As *Space Probe*, the Disney answer to Lucas and Spielberg began pre-production five years ago with Winston Hibler in charge. Following his death in 1976, Peter Ellenshaw took over the supervision of designing and building the miniatures and the preparation of special effects. Eustacia Lycett and Art Cruikshank are in charge of the special photographic effects, with Denny Lea handling special visuals. Frank Phillips is the cinematographer and the script, by Jeb Rosebrook and Garry Day, will be directed by former song-and-dance man Gene Nelson, a Disney alumni from Jodie

Foster's *Freely Friday* and held in higher esteem for his work on Paramount's tv-miniseries, *Washington—Behind Closed Doors*.

At \$17 million, *The Black Hole* is costing the Disney operation a good \$10-million more than their most expensive (and successful) movie, *Mary Poppins*, and \$6-million more than their recent release, the partly-animated *Pete's Dragon*. The space film will be recorded in Dolby sound and utilise \$500,000 computer-controlled effects cameras. The full *Star Wars*-like merchandising push is already under way, including an 80-minute special on the subject of black holes for use in *The Wonderful World of Disney* on tv.

However, Disney is not forgetting its mainstream family audience. To prepare them, perhaps, for the more vivid science fiction thrills to come, the company has lately finished *The Speciman* and *King Arthur* at Pinewood studios. A rip-roaring little film no doubt, but a mere pot-boiler compared with the sheer Kubrickian brevity promised inside and beyond *The Black Hole*.

If Only...

After the news (*Thing to Come*, *Starburst 5*), of Antonioni's Russian science fiction project felling apart at the seams, comes news of the Japanese master director Akira Kurosawa's new Russian film collapsing. A great loss . . . it was to have been another version of *Poa's Masque of the Red Death*.

Why Medusa?

As if we really cared, Richard Burton has been spouting forth on why he made such a fetuous film as *The Medusa Touch*—one of the big flops of '78, despite being directed by the brilliant Jack Gold. "I fought against doing that like a medmen," snorted Burton. "But it was the same old story. Look, we've drummed up a \$1.8-million on your name . . . 'Four times in that project, I said 'No, no, no'. The last time I said, 'Okay, how long will it take?' In fact, it's not a disgraceful film—and I've been in some of those in my time. I've woken up, particularly in my drinking days and thought, 'What on earth am I doing on this piece of crap?' *Equus* is one of the few films I've been in that I've seen." I know this feeling, Dick—since you stole the lead in *Equus*, I've refused to see anything you're in!

Super-Horror I

Margot Kidder drops her Lois Lane cover and marries James Brolin in *The Amityville Horror*—a movie refused by several name stars because of the subject matter. The film stems from Jay Anson's true-story book about a haunted house in Amityville, Long Island, in which mass murders had taken place long before George and Kathleen Lutz bought the place, moved in—and then left in absolute terror within a month. The current owner of the house doesn't seem bothered by ghosts, and

refuses to be invaded by film units, so the movie has to be made in a similar building in New Jersey. Stuart Rosenberg directs the things that go screech in the night, and the rest of the fearless cast includes Rod Steiger, Michael Seeks from *Slaughterhouse 5* and the *Jaws* mayor, Murray Hamilton, Margot Kidder, of course, could hardly be frightened by a few ghosts. . . . not after surviving Brian De Palma's *Sisters* in 1973.

All Bite on the Bite!

Great to see Barbara Steele back on the exploitation screen, even if in something as predictable as Joe Dante's *Piranha*, from Roger Corman's combina. Also involved in this



A shot from *Jaws*' little brother, *Piranha*, a quickie film from Roger Corman.

gory tale of *Jaws*' little, whippersnapper cousins—which makes up for a very soft centre with a rivetting finale—are trusty stalwarts Bradford Dillman, Kevin McCarthy, Keenan Wynn (losing both legs), Corman reliable Dick Miller and, from tv's *Logan's Run*, Heather Menzies. But it's the barbaric Ms Steele who steels all as a chillingly ambivalent government scientist dealing with a rash of piranha attacks in Texas. "There's nothing left to fear," says Barbara at the end, lying her head off and obviously promising us a *Piranha 2* before the end of the year. . . . (If not, the recently revived Republic Pictures will be offering *Barracuda*, anyway).

The film opened in Britain after the funniest series of Press handouts since the heyday of humorous hype from Carl Foreman's *McKenna's Gold* in 1968, concluding with a

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lapel badge insisting: *It'll Be All Bite On The Nite*. Wit behind this spit and polish campaign was United Artists' down-under import, Helen Robinson. We expect her to be decorated by jolly Roger Corman any day now.

Bartel Works Again

Director Paul Bartel has finally got a new movie to make, after the collapse of several Hollywood plans, including the *Frankencrab* number. In February, he'll be in Berlin helming Britain's new horror treat, *The Horrific Movie House Massacre*, a \$2.5 million venture from *The Odd Job* producer Mark Fostater.

Spielberg 2?

Steven Spielberg's quiet right-hand man, Joe Alves, has won his director's spurs with a lavish sf project, *Weatherman*, already five years in the planning. A former racing-driver, Joe worked on all three Spielberg movies and Steven should be lost without him on 1941. Joe had more than one digit in the making of Bruce in *Jaws*, and not only designed the CE3K landing site, but also located the massive dirigible hangar in Mobila, without which most of the film's highspots could never have been accomplished.

Joe Who, you're saying? Right, you've never heard of the guy. He receives less publicity in all the volumes of *Jaws*/CE3K articles and books than the tea-boy on the Spielberg set... just the occasional mention in passing. Only Carl Gottlieb, co-writer of the *Jaws* films, seems to have praised him in print. "I'm oversimplifying, but Joe Alves... has made a contribution that is unappreciated by folks outside the business, and it's time everyone realised that sets and costumes aren't picked off racks, props don't appear out of a truck and the visual unity of the physical elements of a film production spring from one special craftsman's mastery of his art."

Well, now Joe is getting his just rewards. So, indeed, is writer-producer John Chavez, 26. Since starting the project as an UCLA student, John's spent five years writing, re-writing, researching and evolving the *Weatherman* film, which, quite naturally, his own *Weatherman* Production Company will now make as a \$12 million parable of future times... when man controls the weather.

John has his special effects being handled by the Apogee Inc set-up (who are also working on Paddy Chayafsky's *Altered States*). Apogee links many of John Dykstra's *Star Wars* crowd, plus John's genius of a mentor, Douglas Trumbull. John Chavez, however, is far more excited in spiriting Joe Alves away from Spielberg's corner. "He's famous for getting difficult material on the screen," praises John. "It was Joe who designed the mechanical shark for *Jaws* and *Jaws 2*, and was production designer on CE3K and *Jaws*. This will be his first directorial chore, one of only two production designers who have made the transition."

Actually, Joe Alves (then credited as Joseph Alves, Jr.) was art director on Spielberg's first feature, *The Sugarland Express*, before the two monster hits. And although he designed Bruce, it was ex-Disney man Bob Matthey, who created the mechanicalia which made it work. We wished Joe Alves and John Chavez every good fortune, but let's hope John's script is better researched than his background information on Joe Alves.

Shaping Up

Over in Canada, it's vice-versa... That which producer Harry Alan Towers announced at last year's Cannes festival as a super-dupar (or super hyped) movie has been turned, overnight as it were, into a huge tv series, called *The Shape of Things to Come*. The most expensive in the CTV network's history, if not in Canadian history. One wonders where the money went as Jack Palance, Carol Lynley and John Ireland are the less-than-exciting lead stars. However, *Star Wars*' Oscar-winner John Stears has come up with a new robot, Sparky, to help win fans and influence ratings.

"We're trying like everyone else to make a

Further to the feature in *Starburst 4* about John Boorman's *Merlin* project we would just like to confirm that the movie is now in production.

SS..TO..COME.....THINGS

very good show," says Harry Alan Towers. "And we have the funds to do so. H. G. Wells wrote *The Shape of Things To Come* in the later years of his life. He dealt with fantasy in terms of fact, relating the life people lived then, fantasized in the future. We've adapted this to how people will adapt to a future world." (Don't you just cringe when people talk of adapting legends like H. G. Wells?)

"We've taken more than the title, and we are trying to present an entertaining look into the future, based on how people understand life today." In other words, complete with commercial breaks. Backing up the so-called star names is young Canadian actor Nicholas Campbell, and London's New York-born starlet from some rubbish called *Emily*, Koo Stark. Koo appears as a highly independent



Actress Koo Stark.

type, half-Moonie, half-Earthing. With Campbell in tow, her tours of a devastated earth (only useful in supplying the moon colony with water) leads Koo into weekly discoveries and (yawn!) adventures. Including the discovery of the Sperry robot, her devoted companion... once she puts his parts back together again.

How Do You Sue!

Lost in the shuffle of recent events, the news that sf writer Harlan Ellison is suing ABC-TV end Paramount Pictures about their quickly exed TV series, *Futura Cop*. That's the one where Ernest Borgnine was a veteran cop with a robot partner.

Ellison and Ban Bove claim they wrote a short story in 1970 called *Brillo*, about just such a duo. In 1973, they allege, they were invited to develop the idea for the ABC network. ABC dropped the idea, and then the writers claim, an ABC executive, then working at Paramount, discussed the idea anew with Ellison. Come 1976, ABC bought from Paramount a 90 minute pilot film, and ordered thirteen hour episodes.

Thus, *Futura Cop* was born. Michael Shannon played the robo-cop, with Ernie Borgnine as the human partner. And the authors further allege they always suggested Borgnine for the role.

Our question is, if Ellison and Bove win their case, can they then sue ABC again (with Universal-MCA this time) because of *Holmes and Yoyo*? Maybe they will, but first they're also after Paramount's hide for an NBC TV-movie called *Cops and Robbers*, which they allege was pinched from another of their ideas. There should be a tv series in all this, somewhere.

Robo-Jim

All of which brings me to a story told by Jim Delo, Disney's current space star in *The Spaceman and King Arthur*. Jim first set Hollywood alight in the Young Vic production of *Moliere's Scapino*, an outrageous comedy performance, full of bravura, physical dancing and action stuff. So what did American tv want him to play? Only the robot cop in *Holmes and Yoyo*...

"I had the greatest problem trying to get through to these people, telling them, 'Look, if you've got a guy who is very athletic, don't put him in a soap-opera as the patient in the iron lung, because you're not getting your moneysworth. The guy who can't move, who uses his eyes to act with put him in the iron lung. But if you've got some physical presence there—use it!'"

"No good! I was led from one office to another and I could not convince them. 'I think it's rubbish,' I'd say. 'Oh well, why don't you go into the next office and meet Julie, she's our production co-ordinator...' Julie would say, 'Jim, what a wonderful series this is you're being offered...' 'No it's a load of gerbage!' 'Ah, well, perhaps you'd like to meet our Mr. Digby, he's our script controller...'"

"Finally you end up talking to the guy on the front gate—they're all trying to convince you it's the greatest thing ever. In the end, *Holmes and Yoyo* was about the only show I was offered that actually got on tv. I turned them all down, because it was all rubbish. Pathetic rubbish!"

Bigger Buck(s)

Television can forget Buck Rogers. For now... Universal-MCA's notion of screening *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century* as a pilot for a future tv series has been exed. The reason: to see if Buck can generate big box-office bucks. The pilot film is being released as a feature movie in April (in the United States). The series will follow that, if the movie's a smash. Until that fact is known, all the series scripts have been shelved in limbo.

None of which news should come as any major surprise. Buck's executive producer, after all, is none other than Glen A. Larson, men

behind *Battlestar Galactica*, which is creating more interest (and money) as a Sensurround movie in America, Canada and elsewhere (Europe to come) than as a tv series. So much so, a second *Battlestar* movie is planned later this year. The Buck Rogers show, starring newcomer Gil Gerard, is less of a gamble for Universal, considering it was made with a budget as low as \$4,000,000. Could it be that Glen Larson is pinching from his own *Battlestar* effects sequences...?

SF Underwater

Berbere Bech, the most successful Bond Girl since Ursula Andress, joins Richard Johnson and Joseph Cotton in the latest attempt at science-fiction, Italian style. The project is Sergio



Martino's *The Fishmen*—"diabolically created to recover a huge treasure at the bottom of the sea, they lived and fought in the ocean deep." Gets you right in the gills, doesn't it?

Quickies

Superman 2 is due out for the summer of 1980, which means, I suppose, we can expect the double-bill by 1981... just before *Superman III* in '82. Will it ever end, I ask myself?

King Kong's Jessica Lange returns in *All That Jazz*; about time too, Kong wasn't her fault... David Warner is Jack the Ripper in *Time After Time*... Latest mini sf item from Hollywood, *Time Warp*, sets Chris (son of Robert) Mitchum among the veterans, Dorothy Malone and Jim Davis... The next Spidey movie, plucked from TV, will be *Spider-Man Strikes Back*... Before tackling *Star Wars 2*, Harrison Ford found time to join Gene Wilder out West in *No Knife*... Instead of reverting to tv, where he so obviously belongs, the *Jaws 2* director (!), Jeannot Szwarc, sticks to features, courtesy of producer Rey Stark...

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Meteoric Changes

Big change of heart and budget on Sandy Howard's mammoth *Meteor* disaster epic. The film, starring Sean Connery, Natalie Wood, Henry Fonda, Karl Malden, Trevor Howard and Brien Keith, and directed by Britain's Ronald Neame, was all finished, wrapped, edited and ready to open as a \$13-million smasher. Not any more. Or not just yet . . . The climactic destruction of an earth-bound meteor by combined US and USSR rocket attack has been scrapped and being shot all over again at the cost of \$1,250,000 to bring the movie up to special-effects scratch. Ronald Neame hurriedly sent out for his editor and production designer from *The Poseidon Adventure*, Harold Kress and Bill Creber, to handle the re-shoot alongside visual-effects expert, William Cruise, and special effects woman, Margot Anderson.

Producer Sandy Howard, who set up the lavish venture with backing by Warner Brothers and Sir Run Run Shaw's Hong Kong combine, still has every faith in the movie. "It's sensational," he told us. "A big, very suspenseful film made by an outstanding film-maker, Ronnie Neame—to whom neither I, nor the line-producers, had to say one word, apart from Hello. Ronnie's a masterful story-teller. He's produced five of David Lean's pictures, and has so many successes of his own as both producer and director over the last 18 years. I have nothing but the most enormous respect for him. He's objective! He's a great old pro! He makes lots of these young fellows, who think they're mervellous, look like bums."

Merlin's On

Greet news from our San Francisco pals, Summer and Eddie Brown. Their long-mooted *Merlin* project (Sterburst 4) is still very much on. Shooting begins before the summer, for their brand-new Pyramid Enterprises, which should start coining some money for them shortly with a chiller release, *Human Experiments*, starring Linda Haynes, Aldo Ray, Jackie Coogan and his sister, Ellen Travolta.

Thongor is Coming

No star signed as yet, but Milton Subotsky has located his director for *Thongor* in the Valley of the Demons. The name: Harley Cokliss, an afro-headed, bearded young American graduate of the London Film School, lately completing his feature debut, *Torquay Summer*, which he fervently hopes will be re-titled *Free Style*. Subotsky, however, was first turned on to the Cokliss talent after seeing his two Children's Film Foundation movies, *The Battle of Billy's Pond* and *The Glitterball* at the National Film Theatre.

"I want to get back to the styles of the first *King Kong*," Cokliss says of the sword and sorcery project. "where you cannot have a real tree or a real rock. Once you enter that strange,

stylised world, anything and everything can happen. You immediately suspend disbelief." Puppet animation, plus front and rear projection, will be utilised in the film in which, Thongor apart, there is a great magician's role for "a really juicy actor" like Peter Ustinov or Relp Richardson.

Conan is Coming

While kicking his massive heels and waiting, along with the rest of us, for filming on *Conan* to start, Arnold Schwarzenegger flexes his muscles in *Villain*—making Kirk Douglas look small for once, likewise Ann-Margret. The movie is Hal Needham's first outing minus Burt Reynolds, after the massive triumphs of *Smokey and the Bandit* and *Hooper*. As for *Conan* the \$15-million project of *Phantom of the Paradise* producer Edward Pressmen continues to use up scenarists and directors both. Spielberg's close pal, John Milius, has

wanted to make the film for longer than anyone, and both John Frankenheimer and animator Relp Bakshi are said to be ultra-keen. But as the latest script is being tailored by Oliver Stone, who wrote *Midnight Express*, it now seems highly likely that Britain's Alan Parker, who made *Express*, *Bugsy Malone* and *Joan Collins'* funny Cinzano TV commercials, should get the job. As reported here before Frank Frezetta, who painted most of the *Conan* book covers, has definitely been signed as visual consultant and now both Rey Harryhausen and Jim Danforth are offering their model services. More to come on this one, as long as Arnold Schwarzenegger does not diet in the meantime.

Still Rising

Another big chap on the movie warpath is Richard Kiel, the 7ft 2in giant brought to memorable notice as the steel-toothed "Jaws" in *The Spy Who Loved Me*. He encores the



Boris Vallejo's beautiful poster artwork for a new film *Phoenix* to star Richard Kiel (busy, isn't he?) from Jad Films International.

...COME.....THINGS..TO..

role in the new 007 venture, *Moonraker*, and surfaced under a beard in *Force 10 From Navarone*. Not that a set of whiskers can disguise a walking mountain like the 23 stone Kiel. In one of his earliest films, Otto Preminger's dreadful *Skidoo* (1968), Dick Kiel has his screen credit sung. . . . Since Bond, his billing has become almost as high as himself, and everyone is singing his praises. He joins the sf route as *The Humenoid* in Italy, on which more in a later issue (much more, that's a promise) and now Dick's rising again as *The Phoenix* for, of all set-ups, a Taiwan company.

Yablans' Plans

Perhaps we're reading too much into this news, but it looks like producer Frank Yablans had learned a salutary lesson from *The Fury*. . . . He's signed up *Come's* Michael Crichton for two films, while Brian De Palma dances over to the Travolta clan. *Come* was one of the best thrillers of last year and Crichton deserves backing. Unfortunately, like Yablans, he seems to have tired of horrific chills and his two-picture deal is for a comedy and an African adventure yarn. (Yablans and De Palma are expected to team up again, sometime before the end of the century for *The Demolished Man*.)

Poe Corner

There appears more interest—and haste—in filming Edgar Allen's Poe's life than any more of his stories. Sylvester Stallone, who resembles Poe as much as Barbra Straisand, has been longing to play the writar for years. But he's so busy with ra-making *Rocky*—whether he calls it *Paradise Alley* or *Rocky II*—that he's lost out to Keith Carradine in a Canadian venture, and may be to Francois Truffaut in a Paris version. Personally, I doubt if Truffaut will ever play the part; since, but not exactly because of CE3K, he's announced he will continue to act in his own films only.

The Sound of SF

Huh? What on earth is *The Sound of Music* doing in *Starburst*? You may well ask. . . . and the answer should surprise you. Recent



EVERY YEAR YOUNG PEOPLE DISAPPEAR.

TOURIST TRAP

Tourist Trap. A shocker from the aptly named Manson Films International.

office investigations have shown that as well as learning their doh-ray-mes from sugary-larynxed Julie Andrews and moody Poppa Christopher Plummer, the seven Von Trapp kids were really undergoing sciencia fiction training.

The overly beautiful young blond lad in the short pants, standing next to the saintly Julia, happens to be Nicholas Hammond. . . . better known these days as *The Amazing Spider-Man*.

On t'other side of Miss Saccharine is a blonde-topped girl, name of Heather Manziez. . . . better known, once upon a short time, as Jessica in the short-lived tv version of *Logan's Run*.

And that's not all. . . . The tiny brunette lass on the end of the line, two away from Heather, is none other than Angale Cartwright, alias Penny of the space family Robinson in *Irwin*

Allen's *Lost In Space* series for three years.

Well, three out of seven ain't bad. We're musing on an idea to bring the trio back together again for a brand new, prime-time series: *Edelweiss in Space*? Are you listening, Gerry Anderson. . . . ?

The End is Nigh

The disaster move to (hopefully) bury all disaster movies—Irwin Allen's *The Day The World Ended*—is all ready to go. At last. Shooting with Paul Newman, should have begun last May, until script headaches had Allen's trusty wordsmith Stirling Silliphent rushed in to add his touch (not his *Swarm* touch, we hope) to Carl Foreman's scenario. However, the genesis of this film goes even further back. Twentieth Century-Fox first announced the project in 1975, then sold it off to Warners for a cool million dollars. First script

COME....THINGS..TO..COM

by Nelson Gidding was based on the original story and first draft of Edward Anhalt. Ha'd set it up as a period piece on the island of Martinique, circa 1905. Carl Foreman modernised it when he started work early in 1976. And now production begins on February 9 in Hawaii. The shooting schedule calls for 72 days' work, not counting the special effects work which helps push the budget to \$20 million. Director is James Goldstone, who worked well with Paul Newman on his motor-racing trip. **Winning**, ten years ago.

How's That Again?

Georga Romero's *Zombie* (and/or *Dawn of the Living Dead*) has been banned in, of all places, the Lebanon for, of all reasons, being too bloody. For Beirut? They've got to be kidding!

Cronenberg's Man

British director and distributor, Stanley Long (of Alpha Films) is keeping the faith with Canada's David Cronenberg. After great business with *Rabid*, Stan has bought David's new movie, *Brood*, before a single shot was fired, so to speak. The script and the Cronenberg name was good for Stan to complete the deal. *Brood*, we hear, is stronger on violence than horror. No matter, Stan Long is making up for any loss himself. For his next two movies, he's moving out of his usual sex-comedy slot and joins the modern horror genre with a hypnotism thriller, *Brainstorm*... and a chiller about mutants, called *Plasmid*. Sounds good. Don't know about the small though, most of *Plasmid* will be shot in the sawers of London...

Spielberg 3?

Maanwhile, Spielberg's main cinematographer on *Jaws*, bearded Bill Butler (his bearded namesake, Michael, shot *Jaws 2*), is also turning director. Bill's first assignment sounds like *Jaws 3-Adrift and Beyond*. Shootings started in January in Malta.

Obituary

"A brilliant and imaginative writer cut off in his prime," was John Dark's reaction to the shock death on October 30th of his fantasy film scripter, Brian Hayles. Producer Dark was speaking on the Pinewood studios set of *Arabian Adventure*, the second consecutive film he and director Kevin Connor were making from an original Hayles script. The first was *Warlords of Atlantis*. Brian's death is a considerable tragedy the British film industry can ill afford; he had just antard movies after radio/TV success and had become a firm part of the Dark/Connor success story. While their films can easily be written off as family-fodder, a step behind—or indeed ahead of Disney—Brian Hayles showed enormous potential. He was an inspired successor to the Dark/Connor's team's previous mentor, Edgar Rice Burroughs.

Born March 7, 1930, in Portsmouth, Brian

Hayles set out to be a sculptor, until deciding it an uneconomical way of life. He qualified as an art teacher instead, and spent a year "standing back looking at my life from a distance" in Canada, before deciding writing



was his forte. He developed his talent while continuing to teach art at a private Birmingham school for nine years, until confident enough to earn a full-time living with his pen. He worked on BBC radio's everlasting daily soap-opera, *The Archers* (he was invited to write the 7,000th episode in November 1977), and his rare ability to cross-over between contemporary realism and fantasy-fiction supplied scripts for six adventures of *Dr Who*, two *Doomwatch* stories, as well as the soccer saga, *United*, and an episode of *The Regiment*. Then, he became increasingly fascinated with the untapped powers of the human mind, exemplified by his masterly BBC-2 play, *Double Echo*, about a telepathic autistic girl seeing the future with the guidance of a doctor experimenting in ESP. Within a few weeks of his death, his latest TV work, *The Moon Stallion* serial, based on *The White Horse* at Uffington, with a blind, psychic girl in the pivotal role, began transmission on ITV.



A flying carpet takes to the air in *Arabian Adventure*.

His book of the story was published in December.

Brian Hayles and John Dark first got together when trying to set up a TV series for Christopher Lee. The idea never got off the drawing-board, but Dark and Hayles most certainly did—and in fact, Chris Lee returned to Britain for

the first time in three years to take the lead role(s) in their *Arabian Adventure* film. "I couldn't resist it," said Lee. "It's a very fine screenplay by Brian, falling into the true fairy tale genre of romance and beauty combined with the kind of wickedness and violence which has sent delicious shivers down the spines of children of all nations since time immemorial."

Just before his tragic death, Brian Hayles had submitted the first draft of his third original Dark/Connor script—about pirate ghosts. Three family entertainment movies may not add up to much by some film industry standards, but we have to agree with John Dark and Kevin Connor—Brian Hayles will be sorely missed. "If you're really determined to be a writer," he told us once, "there comes a point when you have to make a decision about it, before it is too late." Alas, Brian never knew how tragically late he was... even though in his few years at the top, he gave us, and has left us, with a feast of fantasy entertainment, and often thought-provoking studies into the unknown.

Their Own Write

Hot-shot Oscar-winning scripter William Goldman (Butch Cassidy, *Marathon Man*, *All The President's Men*, *A Bridge Too Far*, *Magie*) is penning *The Year of the Comet* for promoter Joe Levine... Arthur Penn is directing another Oscar-winner's latest, Paddy Chayefsky's *Altered States*, which should do for science what *Hospital* did for medicine and *Network* for TV... The last Hitchcock-scribe John Michael Hayes (*Rear Window*, *To Catch A Thief*, and my favourite, *The Trouble With Harry*) is scripting the \$8-million movie of Milton Caniff's *Terry and the Pirates*...

HoH Lives

Hammerhead Michael Carraras, back at toil again with the re-make of Hitchcock's *The Lady Vanishes*, is preparing a series of thirteen (of course) Gothic specials for US television, under the umbrella title, *Hammer's House of Horror*. Now where have we heard that name before...?

All Change!

Maanwhile, The Odd Job's unfortunate director, Peter Medak, has won himself something more suitable to his superior talent. He directs George C. Scott and his wife, Trish Van Devere, in *The Changeling*, yet another Gothic ghost movie. No doubt about it, *The Exorcist* and *The Omen* really started something! Which means, of course, Italy is still in the act with Ovidio Assonitis' production of *The Visitor* with Mel Farrar, Glenn Ford, John Huston, Sam Peckinpah, Shalaby Winters, a "new screen sensation" in Joanne Nail and a new kid star in Paig Connor. But who can believe the director's name—Julia Paradise?

Compiled by Tony Crawley

SILENT RUNNING

Following part one of our interview with Douglas Trumbull last issue, in which he talked about his film *Silent Running*, *Starburst* takes a closer look at the film that marked Trumbull's debut as a director.

THERE are flowers in the forest. And rabbits and frogs and snails and tinkling music and people with no legs. It's a lush, colourful world which connects the ultimate trip of 2001 with the ultimate space-battle of *Star Wars*.

Douglas Trumbull is, perhaps, the world's most famous visual effects supervisor. He gained his reputation by creating the 'Corridors of Light' sequence at the end of 2001. Then he made his first and, so far,

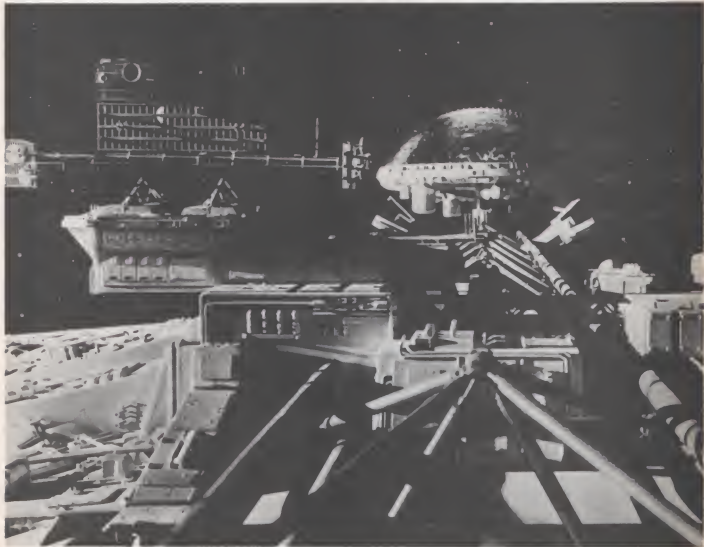
Review by John Fleming

only feature as director of *Silent Running*. Working with him on that film were Jim Rugg, a special effects man for 16 years (3 on *Star Trek*) and visual effects man John Dykstra (who had worked with Trumbull on *The Andromeda Strain*). Dykstra went on to supervise effects on *Star Wars*. Trumbull went on to handle effects for *Close Encounters of the Third*

Kind. But what made Trumbull create the little-screened *Silent Running*?

"I had seen a movie called *Freaks* by Tod Browning. One of them was a guy without any legs. He could stand on one hand and drink from a cup held in the other. And, I thought, you could make a robot that way. You could put a robot body on a guy like that and nobody would be able to figure out how it was done."

The squat, waddling result is a little like



A close-up of the excellent Valley Forge model, showing the highly detailed surface.

R2-D2 in the later *Star Wars*. But you can imagine a dwarf inside R2-D2. You can't imagine anything human inside *Silent Running's* drones.

Research, design and construction for these robot creatures took six months, with two legless Vietnam veterans acting as consultants. Each 20-30 lb. plastic suit had a remote-controlled manipulator arm on the front (with manual over-ride). The arm was designed and made by Trumbull's father Don, so that the robot drones could weed the garden, play cards and perform surgery, as required in the plot. Four young 'bi-lateral amputees' were then employed to walk on their hands inside the suits. "It's a fascinating kind of motion," said Trumbull at the time, "and a purely human one."

To humanise the drones even more, they were given little human traits, like tapping a foot impatiently and nudging each other when the film's 'hero' arrives.

The plot is simple. The year is 2001. The remnants of Earth's forests have been sent into space, enclosed in huge geodesic domes carried by a fleet of American Airlines Space Freighters. Aboard one of the ships, the *USS Valley Forge*, the four crew members have little to do except take part in motorised buggy-races in the vast storage area, play pool with an automatic machine, play cards with each other and have arguments. One of the quartet is a conservationist freak: Freeman Lowell (Bruce Dern). After eight years in space, he feels sure that the Authorities on Earth are bound to re-create the parks and forests system with him as Supervisor.

"It's been too long, Lowell," says one of his crewmates: "People have got other things to do now."

But Lowell is obsessed. He has no family; all he cares about are the forests. On Earth, everywhere you go, the temperature is 75 F, there is hardly any disease and no unemployment. Fine, agrees Lowell. Except that there is no beauty; there are no new frontiers to conquer. If the forests do not return from space, no little girl will ever again be able to see "the simple wonder of a leaf in her hand".

Silent Running has been criticised for being "sci-fi with the soul of an editorial" (*The New Yorker*). The main criticism is that the plot has been tacked on to a simplistic ecological sermon. But Trumbull claims: "The ecology aspect was secondary. What I started with was the relationship between a man and two drones and the growth of that relationship."

His original intention was to have the drones as comic figures. But star Bruce Dern persuaded him to play their scenes relatively 'straight'. This film was Dern's big chance to become a major star. Trumbull had been lucky. He had never before directed a film and never before worked with actors. But it was the *Easy Rider* period when all the major Hollywood studios were prepared to give a chance to



Douglas Trumbull (right) and Bruce Dern (left) deep in discussion on the set of *Silent Running*.

new, untried talent. MGM's 2001 had been a success, so Universal gave 29-year-old Trumbull the opportunity to direct. And, for the central role, he cast Bruce Dern.

"I've been 14 years an actor," said Dern at the time, "and I've always eaten babies or played some sick goddamn guy in everything I've done."

Dern saw the character he played as a sympathetic part. But Freeman Lowell is not exactly a well-balanced person. In fact,

he is pretty psychotic. The astronauts receive a message from Earth. A voice tells them to "abandon and nuclear destruct" all the forests and return to Earth so that the freighters can be returned to commercial use. Lowell, who has been praising 'real' food and flowers since the film began, is not happy. To emphasise the point and make the audience empathise with him, Joan Baez's voice bursts onto the soundtrack singing about "Fields of children running wild... in the Sun..."



Freeman Lowell (Bruce Dern) flanked by the 'droids takes one of his "turns" while bathing.



Two of the space ships cruise silently through the black void of space.

The other crew members are not interested in the forests: "If anyone had been interested, something would have been done a long time ago."

Lowell's staring eyes become more paranoid. One of the *Valley Forge's* three forest domes is jettisoned and destroyed. But, when one of the crew members tries to enter another dome, he is confronted by Lowell, who is holding a spade. In the ensuing fight, our conservationist hero is injured in the leg and kills his crewmate with the spade, pressing the handle down into the man's windpipe. Meanwhile, the other two astronauts are setting the nuclear bomb in the third forest dome. Lowell jettisons the dome and detonates the bomb, killing both men. Now he is alone in the vast ship, cruising through space.

The 26 ft. long model used for filming exteriors took 30 people over 8 months to build and was so fragile that it could not be moved without pieces falling off. Surface details were added using parts from 650 or 850 (memories vary) Japanese model kits for Second World War German tanks. The over-all look of the ship was based on an observation and communication tower built for the 1970 Osaka World Fair in Japan (but turned on its side, of course). "Our ship here," said Trumbull, "is like the one in *2001* in some ways. Very long and slender. I did a lot of the supervision of the models in that movie and got involved in some of the basic design." *Silent Running* includes one sequence that had been abandoned in *2001* as too complex. The 'ultimate trip' in *2001* had been intended to be a journey through the rings of Saturn; but this was changed to a trip through the 'stargate' of Jupiter.

In *Silent Running*, Lowell tells the rest of the space fleet that he has technical problems on board the *Valley Forge* and premature explosions have killed the other crew members. The three drones supervise the disposal of debris supposedly from these

explosions. 'Silent Running' is a term in submarine warfare: a desperation manoeuvre in which all engines and machinery are turned off and debris is jettisoned to convince the enemy that the ship has been hit. Lowell then heads his supposedly-crippled ship towards Saturn's rings, knowing the fleet will not follow him because no one has ever survived a trip through the rings. The space fleet promises to send a rescue ship "the long way round" to find him (if he survives). But this will be like looking for a needle in a haystack. The *Valley Forge* enters the gaseous rings.

This sequence took about a week to film, with multi-coloured clouds rushing towards the camera and force-waves buffeting the

entire ship. The clouds were created by a streak photography process similar to the slit-scan process that Trumbull had invented and used in the *2001* Corridors of Light sequence. But the effect is visibly cheaper and much less spectacular. "I felt," said Trumbull, "that the beauty and majesty of *2001* were super-stylised and super-smooth. I wanted a more rough-and-ready, almost documentary, look."

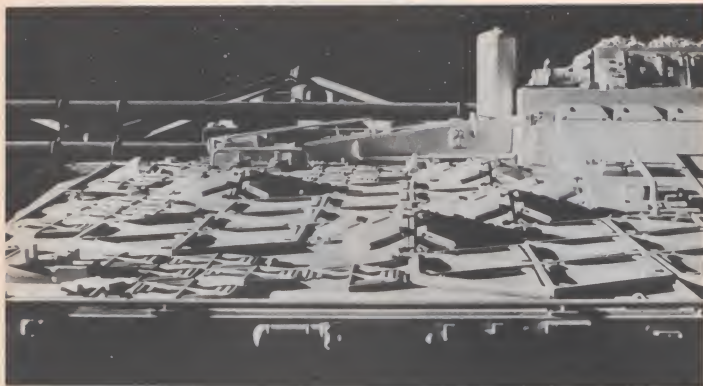
His whole concept of *Silent Running* was to have a documentary feel, even in the interior of the spaceship: "We wanted to go counter to what I had done in *2001*, which was a slick, well-organised spaceship. We wanted to give the raw technical appearance that you get inside a real naval ship." So that is just what he did: he rented a real US Navy ship.

For the interior shots, he used an old aircraft carrier, the real *USS Valley Forge*, decommissioned from the Navy a year earlier and waiting to be stripped for the scrap heap. The main location shooting was done in the ship's Combat Information Centre (CIC), between the hangar and flight decks, where there were about 30 rooms of various sizes. Trumbull ripped out the ceilings to reveal ducts and wires, modernised the door frames and repainted walls in warmer colours. He used vacuum-formed plastic for detailing. The naval ship's former Air Combat Intelligence Headquarters became the spaceship's main control room. And the vast hangar deck was used for the buggy racing sequences in the spaceship's storage area.

Near the start of the film, the three other crew members were seen racing round this vast storage area, laughing and enjoy-



*Douglas Trumbull (right) directs Bruce Dern (left) during the buggy scene in *Silent Running*.*



The space ship models were constructed using parts from plastic hobby kits that can be bought in any toy shop.

ing themselves. Now, completely alone, Lowell, drives around the same area. But he has no one to race with. And no one to talk to, except the drones. There were three of the little robots. But one was ripped apart as the ship tore through the rings of Saturn. Lowell now names his two mechanical companions Huey and Dewey; and their lost comrade Louie (after Donald Duck's nephews).

He re-programmes them so that they can operate on his injured leg, play cards with him, tend the gardens with him and (apparently) talk silently to each other through their air vents. He himself wanders around in his off-white gown looking like St. Francis of Assisi, watering the flowers and trees, looking at Earth through a telescope and thinking about his dead comrades: "I don't think I'll ever be able to excuse what I did. But I had to do it." On the soundtrack, Joan Baez sings: "Earth between my toes and a flower I will wear when he returns..." In other words, nothing much is happening.

And this is the film's weakness. It is well-meaning; it is technically well-made; but nothing much happens. There are three credited scripters one of whom, Mike Cimino, also co-scripted *Magnum Force* and went on to direct *Thunderbolt and Lightfoot* and *The Deer Hunter*. But, says Trumbull, "The screen writers didn't get what I wanted. Much of what they produced was too violent, vicious and unfeeling. I ended up re-writing two-thirds of the script myself." Talking about why he made the film, he explained:

"It isn't that I'm interested in science-fiction, rather I'm interested in technology

and the technical ways of making film. In high school, I was interested in architecture and art, and used to read some science-fiction—Heinlein and Bradbury and so on—but never really very much of it." In fact, he admits: "I never had any ambition to be a director. I wanted to be an illustrator." That is the problem with *Silent Running*. It is brilliantly illustrated but the storyline and dramatic structure are fatally weak. Trumbull succeeded in his aim of showing "machines as a tool that must and can remain under the control of human beings, not as a lurking, malevolent force". But that is not a storyline in itself. Live-action shooting on the film took 37 days; creating the special effects took 7 months. And this is a fair reflection of the result on the screen.

The forest scenes were shot at an aircraft hangar in Van Nuys, California. Real soil, shrubs, flowers, trees and animals were used. The geodesic dome seen in the background was created by front projection (a complex process explained simply in John Brosnan's book *Movie Magic*). This technique had been used successfully in 2001 but, for *Silent Running*, Trumbull designed a smaller, more mobile unit. Front projection also helped him make the 35 to 40 ft. diameter forest look, in Trumbull's words, "enormous" (though this is a matter of opinion).

What happens to the forests in the film? One day Lowell and the drones find the plants and trees dying and defoliated, affected by some unknown force. Then, in an accident, Lowell crashes his buggy into Huey and, even after operating on him, the drone does not fully recover. To

make matters worse, the fleet rescue ship finds *Valley Forge*. It has come to 'save' him. Lowell suddenly realises why the forests are dying and realises there is only one way out...

Douglas Trumbull succeeded in what he set out to do: "I was looking for a way to make a picture of the magnitude of 2001 on a reasonable budget. I knew that by using what I had earned on 2001 and some new ideas I had that wouldn't require terribly expensive experimentation, I could do *Silent Running* for a given price (\$1,350,000) and in a given amount of time." He succeeded, but people don't pay to see directors succeed in their self-appointed tasks. They pay to be entertained. (Universal were reportedly reluctant to release the film.)

He wanted to make a special effects film and the story was of secondary importance: a fatal mistake. The *Village Voice* was right when it said *Silent Running*, with its superb technical effects and heavy, meaningful message, "falls somewhere between Stanley Kubrick and Stanley Kramer."

Silent Running (1971)

Bruce Dern (as Freeman Lowell), Cliff Potts (Wolf), Ron Rifkin (Barker), Jesse Vint (Keenan), Mark Persons, Steven Brown, Cheryl Sparks and Larry Whisenhunt (Drones).

Directed by Doug Trumbull, Screenplay by Deric Washburn, Mike Cimino and Steven Bocho, Visual Effects by Doug Trumbull, John Dykstra and Richard Yuricich, Produced by Michael Gruskoff.

Time: 89 mins

Cert: U



BEAUTY AND THE BEAST by Chris Achilleos

This is another collection of cover paintings but this time the artist has made his name with fantasy paperback covers rather than science fiction although his work has been featured on the covers of the Doctor Who paperbacks.

Most of Chris Achilleos' paintings involve figures rather than machinery and when he works on one or two figures he achieves a dramatic affect. Apart from his fantasy covers there are included some paintings of women that he did for *Man Only* magazine—they are fantasy but of a different kind(!) and hardly the sort of thing that you would show to your grandmother.

As with the Chris Foss book this is beautifully packaged in full colour throughout.

Published by Paper Tiger. 96 pages. £3.95.



KILLTEST by Graham King

It is a fact that large numbers of people in this modern society of ours get a kick out of violence (especially when they are not involved); you only have to look at the success of violent films and of boxing and wrestling to know that at least a few of the people watching are

wishing it was for real.

Graham King has picked a time, not very far off, when the Mafia are catering to those people by staging gladiatorial combats. The cost of admission to the spectators is very high and to the participants, even higher—it means death to one or more. Obviously the governments of the world are unhappy to let events continue and the book revolves round attempts by world leaders to terminate the Mafia's activities.

Whilst the plot has some interesting aspects, the main characters are not particularly well-defined and it is difficult to identify or sympathise with any of them.

Published by Arrow Books. 272 pages. 55p.



PHOENIX WITHOUT ASHES by Edward Bryant and Harlan Ellison
In 1973 Harlan Ellison created a series for television to be called *The Starlost* and this is Edward Bryant's novelisation of Ellison's original concept. The basic story, though it is the traditional one of the fate of the passengers on an interstellar cruiser that lost its way generations before, is very well written.

Accompanying the story is Ellison's account of the problems he encountered dealing with the producers. It is a fascinating tale and serves as a useful insight into the (American) television service.

Apart from the addition of Ellison's Afterword another aspect that makes this book different from the norm is the cover which is in a very eye-catching design using a system called "video-back". This system utilises multi-coloured foils and a 3-D effect to make sure you don't miss this book as you pass the display counter. The same publishers will shortly be issuing Michael Moorcock's *Golden Barge* which will use the same system and various gold-hued foils to produce a very attractive picture.

Published by Savoy Books. 128 pages. £1.25.



THE SILVER SURFER by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby

For many years fans of the Silver Surfer have been demanding that his own comic (cancelled in 1970) be revived. Instead Marvel publisher Stan Lee has decided to go one better and devote a complete, full-colour book to a new Silver Surfer story.

Unfortunately he may have left it too late: the character featured here is a parody of its former self. I suspect that wishing the story to be the best, Stan Lee tried too hard. Jack Kirby's artwork is up to his usual professional standard but even so it does not seem as good as it was back in 1965 when he and Stan Lee first introduced the character. Or maybe it is just that we are all a few years older.

After such a long wait this book comes as a disappointment: all the ingredients are there to make this a classic of illustrated story telling but the final result is just another comic book even if the story is one hundred pages long.

Published by Simon Schuster. 124 pages. £3.25—Import.



FUTURE TENSE: THE CINEMA OF SCIENCE FICTION by John Brosnan

Not only does John Brosnan know his subject but he is able to communicate his interest in it to his readers.

Futura Tense is a history of science fiction in the cinema from its early beginnings in 1902 with Melies' *A Trip To The Moon* through to 1978 with *Ster Wars*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, *Capricorn One* *et al.* It is more than just a catalogue of film titles with accompanying plot synopses: included are many comments and insights from people involved in the films. Further, Mr Brosnan has no qualms about stating his own opinions. Without a doubt a lot of care has gone into this book and it is both interesting and informative. It is a pity that the price should put the book beyond the reach of many fans—perhaps the publishers could consider a paperback edition? Published by Macdonald and Jones. 320 pages. £6.95.



VULCAN! by Kathleen Sky

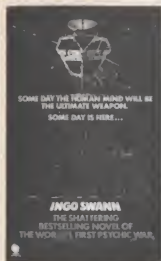
The latest in a long line of new Star Trek stories and there are no prizes for guessing who the central character is. As the writers of these new stories seem to be fascinated by Spock's lack of emotion, I am fascinated by their endless search for plot ideas in which his emotions can show through, though finally he remains himself. There is no doubt that those whose work is allowed to see print can write well but until they try an entirely different subject I think few, other than ST fans, will find great enjoyment from their books.

Published by Bantam Books. 192 pages. 75p.

STAR FIRE by Ingo Swann

The author is, apparently, acknowledged to be one of America's super-psychics, so one may assume that this novel of psychic war is written with more than just a passing knowledge of telepathy, telekinesis and related phenomena. Whether that is true or not the author has certainly written a grippingly different kind of story.

If you have an open mind regarding



the possibility of psychic powers than Star Fire is convincing enough to leave you wondering if it could happen.
Published by Sphere Books. 368 pages. £1.25.

SUPERMAN THE MOVIE edited by Julius Schwartz
The best way of describing this giant-size tabloid magazine would be as a souvenir of the film. In this it more than serves its purpose: not only are there many stills from the film, behind-the-scenes photographs and information on the stars, but there are also pro-

duction sketches and information on the designers which are hard to find elsewhere. It is interesting to note that among the many photos are at least two from scenes that did not appear in the final released version of the film.

To complete the package DC have reproduced extracts from various Superman comic book adventures and these show just how faithful (or not) the Salkinds have been to the Superman legend.

If you want a memento of the movie then, since the cinemas no longer sell programmes and souvenir booklets, this (with half the pages in colour) would be a safe bet.



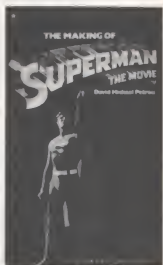
Published by DC Comics Inc. 64 pages. £1.75-Import.



21st CENTURY FOSS by Chris Foss
Most buyers of science fiction paperbacks will know Chris Foss' artwork even if his name is unfamiliar. He has made a name for himself with his cover paintings which invariably feature superbly detailed spacecraft of apparently gargantuan proportions.

This book is a compilation of some of the best of his sf work together with paintings he has done in other areas. Within 21st Century Foss his non-science fiction work is mainly confined to 20th Century Warfare and only a few pages are devoted to this. As is usual with Dragon's Dream publications the production and packaging is superb, resulting in a very nice book.

THE MAKING OF SUPERMAN THE MOVIE by David Michael Patrou
This book does not do the film justice. Whilst full of information on the activities of the various cast and production members, it ultimately tells you very little of how the film was made. Even so it is an interesting read although I am still left not knowing how they made him fly.



Published by Star Books. 224 pages. 75p.

Reviews by Alex Carpenter

FUTURE TENSE

THE CINEMA OF SCIENCE FICTION

John Brosnan

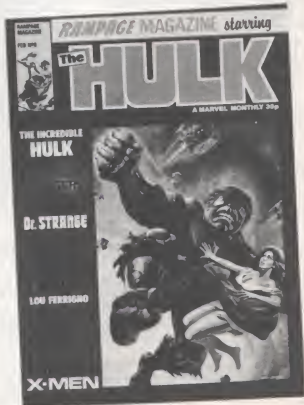
Foreword by Harry Harrison who writes 'It has been a pleasure to read this volume: the right book published at the right time... John Brosnan has written the definitive history of the birth and growth of sf films.'

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FANTASY FILM CONVENTION

A pictorial review of a unique British event.



House of Hammer and Starburst artist extraordinaire, Brian Lewis, signs Handbooks.



Make-up wizard on many Hammer films, Roy Ashton, signs autographs for admirers of his work.



Convention attendees rumage through the magazines on sale at the Convention Bookstall. Note the back issues of *Starburst* in the foreground.



Roger Dicken (special effects on *Warlords of Atlantis*) chats with organisers Mike and Rose Conroy.

FANTASY FILM CONVENTION



John Bolton, artist on Father Shandor for House of Hammer, autographs Convention Handbooks for fans.



Producer Milton Subotsky (Land that Time Forgot, Thorogor) surrounded by hordes of film fans.



Michael Armstrong signs autographs after a highly entertaining talk about his next project, a comedy entitled The Curse of Tittikamen.



Editorial director of Marvel Comics, Dez Skinn, signs autographs for fans.



Convention attendees examine the display of original sf paintings by artist Brian Lewis.



Artist Dave Gibbons after the highly successful artists panel.

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SPACE SOUND

MESSAGE *from* SPACE

Directed by Kinji Fukasaku

Full movie review ~ see page 20